



## **TESTING BEFORE HAIR COLOUR SERVICES**

Over the last year salons have been closed more than they have been open but that does not mean that we have been asleep!

There have been significant changes in the directives issued to us by Government, insurance companies and industry bodies around hair colouring and chemical processes.

Here I would like to explain the changes that have been made to the way that we carry out our testing for all your colouring services.

For the last 10 years OTF have skin tested every client for hair colour allergies with the tattoo type Colour Start skin test. The Government regulator - MHRA (Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency) most recently in the news for the work done with the covid vaccines ensuring their safety, have approved the Colour Start test as a medicine.

This means that there have been changes to the way it looks, is administered and sold, and how the information is monitored and stored.

Colour start is supported by a "Passport System" which monitors and stores the information of individuals using Colour Start as a skin testing method. The MHRA have mandated that once a test has been carried out a positive/green/go ahead result has been recorded future colour service tests would comprise of a screening questionnaire to assess whether another test is necessary. More often than not, it will be safe to proceed to colour without another test. A new test is only needed if something has changed. This is because one of the identified allergy triggers is exposure over time, therefore the MHRA do not want to see consumers exposed unnecessarily. They believe when it comes to testing – less is best.

**\*If you have a positive/green result the stylist can use any colour product and it will cover for changes in shade or product type. This means the stylist has the flexibility to have the most suitable product for the task in hand.**

This brings to our next change, our industry body NHBF (National Hair and Beauty Federation) have listened to the MHRA and decided that we should use similar screening methods for skin testing with an AAT (allergy Alert Test – blob on the arm). So they have worked with some of the industry insurance companies on a protocol which means we only need to test every 6 months and screen in between times. Provided that the screening questions do not indicate re testing.

**\*If you are looking for a colour change or we deem it necessary to change product type after consultation we would have to re-skin test.**

OTF hair has been screening with questions for safety for some time, so we only had to make minor changes to our questions. It all seems a bit complicated currently, do not worry. OTF stylists have been well trained in how best to keep you safe whilst having your hair coloured. Should you have any questions we will be happy to put your mind at rest.

### ***Special Under 16 Policy***

Manufacturers recommend that any permanent colour should not be used on anyone under the age of 16. Exposure to hair colour early in a young adult's development can sometimes set up a sensitivity that could develop into full allergic reactions at a later date. It is our policy to not sanction colouring on anyone under 16.

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## **Skin testing Frequently Asked Questions**

### **How much is Colour start and where do I buy it?**

The Colour Start test is £15. You can buy it from OTF Salon or from [www.salonlove.shop](http://www.salonlove.shop) by clicking on the [link here](#). To support this convenient method of testing, when you buy a Colour Start test we will take £5 off your next three colour services. This £5.00 discount will automatically be activated at the end of your service.

### **You used to give me a Colour Start transfer for every colour service – what has changed?**

Colour Start has been registered and approved by the MHRA (Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency) – subsequently we have to follow the guidelines as set out by the regulations. The test is different from the transfer test. It is supported by the Colour Start Passport. Your details are securely and confidentially held on your passport. Once you have tested with new Colour Start, subsequent colour services only require screening on your passport which could be just a couple of minutes. Potentially you could make an appointment and get your hair coloured on the same day.

### **Why do OTF choose the colour start screening method for testing?**

You are in control of your passport and therefore your testing and screening. It is confidential, we only get to see your result if you choose to share it with us. You can use your Colour Start passport for screening for any colour services in any salon. Example, if you have brow colouring service you can use the same test. If you are travelling and you need to use a different salon, you can share your passport result with any salon. You can get your service done with little notice; you do not have to wait 48 hours for a skin test.

### **My stylist said Colour start is not suitable for me – why is that?**

If you are pregnant or have active dermatitis you cannot test with Colour Start. You should speak to your stylist about an AAT (Allergy Alert Test) in the salon.

### **How long does an AAT take and how much does it cost?**

You will need an AAT appointment at least 48 hours before your colour appointment. It only takes 10 minutes in the salon and is a free test.

### **Why do I need a skin test?**

Reactions to hair colour can be serious and even life threatening. There are strict guidelines from manufacturers, insurers, industry bodies and the MHRA around using hair colour. We endeavour to give you peace of mind so that you can safely enjoy your visits to the salon.

### **Why don't you test me every time?**

We use screening to monitor the need for testing you before your service. If nothing has changed since your last test and we have a valid record (typically within the last 6 months) it will be OK to proceed with your service.

### **I have been colouring my hair for years, why do I need a test?**

One of the triggers for sensitivity and reactions to hair colour is exposure over time, therefore it is important we keep monitoring for your safety. OTF are committed to your safety and use only the best products and methods for hair colouring.