

A photograph of three stainless steel bowls on a hair salon counter. The bowls contain different hair coloring products: one with white cream, one with yellow cream, and one with orange cream. A hairbrush is visible in the foreground.

## Colouring products, equipment and their use

### Learning outcomes

- Maintain effective and safe methods of working when colouring and lightening hair.
- Prepare for colouring and lightening.
- Colour and lighten hair.

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### Introduction

Colouring is arguably the most exciting and often most difficult aspect of hairdressing. The increasing demands and expectations of clients have made colouring, and in particular special colour effects, the 'must have' of hairdressing. Our clients are better informed, have a better understanding, are more aware of what's on offer and are often keen to have a go themselves. This has led to a change in salon colouring. The amount of business done by the home colouring market is huge and this has had a particular impact on salon-based work. It is now more technically demanding than ever before, but this new challenge is not a threat. It now enables all hairdressers to be more professional in their role, explore their creativity and further develop their technical skills.

# Colouring products, equipment and their use

## Tools required for this treatment



Trolley



Foils



Meche



Measuring flask



Mixing bowl



Tint brushes



Applicator bottle



Combs



Sectioning clips



Barrier cream



Cotton wool



Gown



Towel



Cape



Vinyl gloves



Spatula



Cap



Climazone

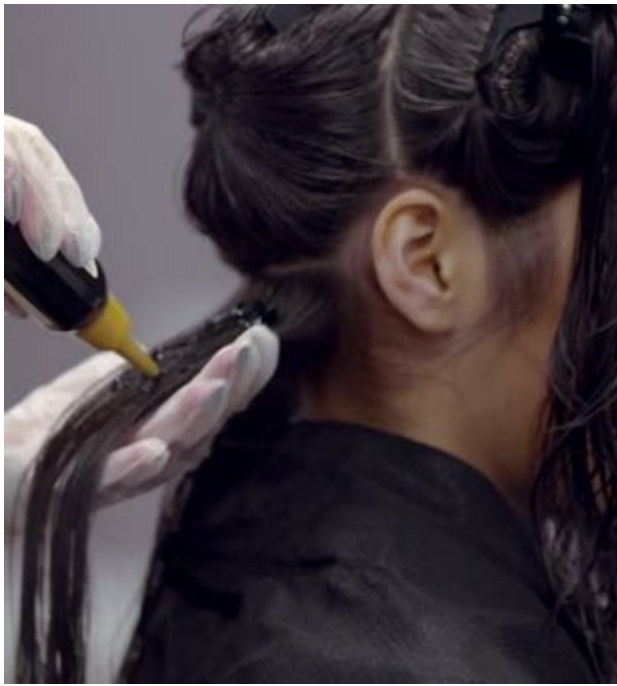
## Types of hair colour

**Temporary colour** - available in the form of lotions, creams, mousses, gels, lacquers, sprays, crayons, chalks, paints, mascaras and glitter dust. On hair in good condition these do not penetrate the hair cuticle, nor do they directly affect the natural hair colour: they simply sit on the cuticle until washed off.

**Semi-permanent colour** - semi-permanent colours contain pigments which are deposited in the hair cuticle and outer cortex. No developer/oxidisers are required. The colour gradually fades each time hair is shampooed. The colour will last 6 - 8 washes or longer depending on the porosity of the hair.

**Quasi-permanent colour** - also called tone-on-tone colours, these will gradually wash/fade and grow out of the hair. Quasi-permanent colours still require the mixing of colour with a low strength developer/oxidiser. They can give up to 50% coverage on white/grey hair and can last up to 12 shampoos depending on the condition of the hair. A Quasi will fade and grow out leaving a less visible regrowth.





**Tip:**

Compound henna is incompatible with hairdressing materials. It should not be confused with natural (vegetable) henna which is compatible with other hairdressing services.

**Permanent colour** - permanent colours are made in a wide variety of shades and tones. They can cover white and natural coloured hair to produce a range of natural, fashion and fantasy shades. Hydrogen peroxide is mixed with permanent colour. This oxidizes the hair's natural pigments and joins the small synthetic pigments together with the natural ones in a process called polymerization. The hair will then retain the colour permanently in the cortex. Coloured hair will gradually grow out as new hair growth shows the natural hair colour. Hair in poor condition, however, may not hold the colour and colouring could result in patchy areas and colour fading.

**Vegetable-based colour** - plant extracts have been used as colour compounds for thousands of years. These were the only sources of colour until chemists developed synthetic alternatives. Natural henna (*Lawsonia*) is still used widely today in many countries. Natural plant based dyes do not present any problems for hairdressing treatments; however, these ingredients are sometimes added to other elements to form compounds, mixtures of vegetable extracts and mineral substances. These products can be incompatible with professional products and may react with professional colours or perming products.

**Metallic dyes - incompatibles** - also known as progressive dyes, these are surface coating colours. They are variously known as reduction, metallic, sulphide and progressive dyes. These types of colours are also incompatible with chemical hairdressing services and are still found in men's colour restorers.

## Lightening hair

**High lift colour** - are permanent but will provide up to five shades of lift to be used on base 6 or above. These products are similar in composition to normal hair colours with one exception: they use an alkaline component which swells the hair shaft, enabling a better penetration of chemicals into the cortex and hence are able to lighten hair as well.







**Emulsion lightener** - made up of two compounds that are added together then mixed with hydrogen peroxide, oil or gel lighteners and activators, boosters or controllers. This type of lightener is specially formulated to use on the roots of the hair and is suitable for contact with the scalp. It is kinder and gentler during the lightening process and is mixed with 20 vol. hydrogen peroxide. Emulsion lighteners are slow acting.

**Powder lightener** - these products can be mixed with 6, 9 or 12 percent hydrogen peroxide, depending upon the level of lift required. Powder lighteners are fast acting and are used for a variety of highlighting techniques.

## Tools and equipment for colouring hair

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**Measuring flasks and mixing bowls** - measuring hydrogen peroxide at any strength must be accurate; the amount used in relation to colour is a critical factor to successful outcome. All gel and cream colours, when mixed, will be stiff enough not to run or drip when either on the brush or on the hair.

### Tip:

Place the measuring flask onto a flat surface to get an accurate measurement of hydrogen peroxide or developer.

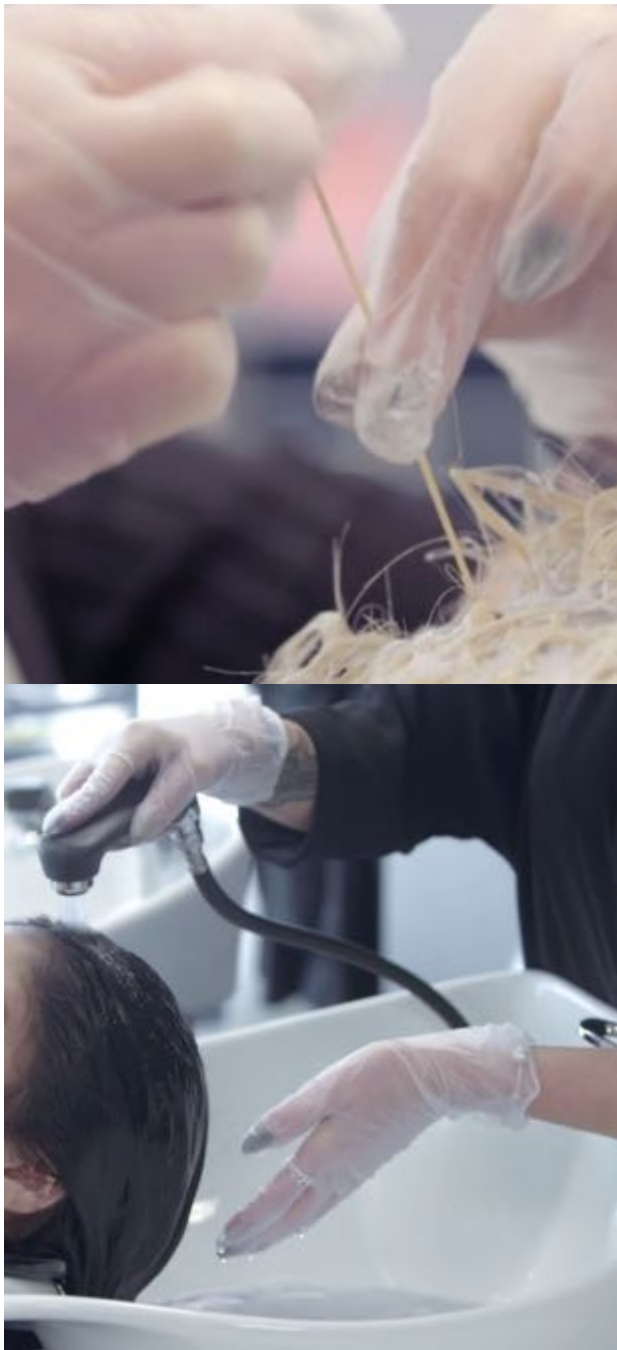


**Brushes** - used to distribute colour evenly and accurately on the hair; these must be thoroughly washed and sterilised between clients.

**Sectioning clips** - these are used to section the hair to make applying the colour easier; they also prevent different sections of hair touching once the colour has been applied.

**Barrier cream** - used as a physical barrier to prevent staining around the client's face/hairline. Also particularly useful if client has any general sensitivity to chemical-based products.

**Disposable vinyl gloves** - It is recommended as best practice to wear a glove of 30cm in length to offer protection to the wrist area.



**Towels and gowns** - each client must have a fresh, clean towel and gown. These should be washed on a suitable (washing machine) wash programme at 60°C to remove any soiling or staining and to prevent the spread of infection by killing any bacteria. Fabric conditioners may be used to provide a luxurious softness and freshness.

Most salons have special 'colour-proof' gowns for colouring and lightening processes. These gowns are resistant to staining and are made from finely woven synthetic materials that will stop colour spillages from getting through onto the client's skin or clothes.

## Health and safety

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Hair colouring involves the application of a variety of potentially harmful chemicals. Therefore, the care you take in handling products and preparing yourself and the client is absolutely critical to safe and successful colouring.

- Ensure all tests are carried out.
- Always gown your client properly so that they are protected from spillages of chemicals.
- Always wear the PPE (personal protective equipment) provided by the salon every time you apply colour.
- Wear disposable gloves, dry hands thoroughly and regularly moisturise to prevent contact dermatitis.
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions; never deviate from the tried-and-tested formulae.
- Make sure that your work position is clear and that your posture is correct.
- Make sure that the client is comfortable throughout, as they will be sitting for some considerable time.
- Avoid inhalation of powder lighteners - be very careful when you dispense powder lightener into a bowl. The particles are very small and tend to 'dust' into the air very easily. This is a hazardous chemical compound which can cause respiratory conditions.