Transcript for the skin and hair test video

# Skin and hair test

### Undertake a consultation

In this video we demonstrate how to carry out hair and skin tests. During consultation it is vital that you understand your client’s requirements. Ask about and consider the client’s lifestyle. For example, if they are very busy, then a high-maintenance service may not be suitable. Always check the condition of the hair and scalp during the client consultation.

Examine the hair texture, type and volume. Any colouring or perm treatment requires a skin test 48 hours prior to the service as well as the usual elasticity and porosity test. Look out for any skin conditions, like eczema or psoriasis. Lumps, moles, cuts or abrasions may also limit the services you can provide to the client. Ask the client if they are aware of any such conditions. Ask the client about any previous chemical treatments, and if they have had any treatments in the past, carry out an incompatibility test to ensure there is no reaction with the colours or perming chemicals you plan to use. Remember to record the client’s responses, the test results and the date they were tested.

### Conduct an elasticity and porosity test

Carry out an elasticity test. Wet a few strands of hair with a spray. Stretch a section of the hair. Healthy hair should feel slightly elastic and give slightly then return to its original length. If the hair snaps or stretches more than half of the original length, then the hair is over elastic. This means it has a weak internal structure cortex and may break under the pressure of chemical services or intense physical services, like excessive heat from straighteners.

Also, check the porosity of the hair. Take a strand of hair and hold it by the root between the thumb and forefinger. Run your fingers along the hair strand from the root to the end and back again. The rougher the hair feels, the more porous it is. Porosity is the ability to absorb substances and depends on the condition of the hair cuticle. If the cuticle scales are closed or lie flat, the hair will have good porosity. If they are tightly closed, penetration of products will be more difficult. If the scales are damaged, open or missing, the hair will be over-porous and absorb chemicals too easily and quickly.

### Check for growth patterns

Look at the hair growth patterns for any potential issues. For example, if, rather than growing downwards, it actually grows upwards, this is not conducive to styles that taper towards the nape of the neck. You must be alert for any contra indication against treatment and it is vital to record your client’s responses. Put your client at ease by first explaining why these precautions must be undertaken. These tests ensure their safety, after all. Continue to explain what you are doing as you work.

### Conduct an incompatibility test and skin test

We need to conduct an incompatibility test to see if any previous treatments might may the client’s hair unsuitable for the desired service. Take a cutting of your client’s hair and place it into a bowl with one-part ammonium hydroxide or ammonium thioglycolate and 20 parts, 6%, hydrogen peroxide.

If you observe any reaction within 30 minutes, such as the bowl heating up or the hair cutting changing colour, then there are metallic salts present and we cannot proceed with any chemical treatment.

Next, we need to apply a skin test. Select a dark base shade. Clean an area of skin about eight millimetres square behind the ear. Apply a small amount using a cotton bud. Leave the applied treatment for 48 hours. Always refer to the manufacturers’ instructions for the time the treatment should be left on. If the client experiences any itchiness, redness, swelling or burning, you should not go ahead with the treatment. Record the results of the skin test.

### Check for allergies or other medication

Ask the client if they have any allergies or if they are taking any medication that might interfere with the treatment. Once the consultation is completed, the stylist can then make suitable recommendations, taking into account the hair characteristics. Perform the service only if you do not find any contra indications.

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