
FORMOL / FORMALDEHYDE AND PRESERVATIVES RELEASING FORMALDEHYDE

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WHAT IS FORMOL?

Formol is a liquid organic compound known as formaldehyde in the gaseous state. It is mainly used as a disinfectant, fixative for biological tissues and preservative in cosmetic products, in which it prevents the growth of microorganisms (bacteria, yeasts and fungi). Formol is also endowed with hardening properties.

The use of formaldehyde in cosmetic products is highly regulated. The compound is authorized, in a restricted manner, in nail hardeners and as a preservative at low concentrations. Use is prohibited in cosmetic products in aerosol or spray form. Formaldehyde has recently been incorporated, at high concentrations, in hair relaxing products. The products do not comply with the current international regulations, are associated with a risk for consumers and hairdressers and therefore should not be marketed. The products have been targeted by regulatory procedures initiated by the various international regulatory authorities.

IS FORMALDEHYDE ASSOCIATED WITH RISKS?

Currently, formaldehyde is considered by various international scientific organizations as being associated with the emergence of nasopharyngeal cancer after exposure by inhalation. This explains the very strict restrictions on use of the substance in cosmetics. The formaldehyde in cosmetic products is not associated with any risk for human health under normal conditions of use.

ARE PRESERVATIVES RELEASING FORMALDEHYDE ASSOCIATED WITH RISKS?

Certain preservatives have the characteristic of releasing very small quantities of formaldehyde to ensure the microbiological protection of cosmetic products. The preservatives have undergone very rigorous evaluation of their safety in cosmetic products by various international scientific expert committees, who have defined the conditions for use of the preservatives in cosmetic products. Preservatives releasing formaldehyde have thus received regulatory authorizations enabling their use without any risk for consumer health.

WHY ARE L'ORÉAL PRODUCTS SAFE?

We never compromise on the quality and safety of our products for consumers and beauty-care professionals. We decided long ago not to use formaldehyde as an ingredient in our products even though the regulations authorize its use. We use, however, three ingredients releasing small quantities of formaldehyde as preservatives in some of our products at concentrations that are always less than the regulatory limits. The preservatives and their concentrations have been rigorously selected to ensure the correct level of microbiological protection of the products while ensuring the safety and quality of our products for consumers.

L'ORÉAL