Section 12
Patch Testing

FOR BEAUTY & NAILS

Habia

12.1 What is Patch Testing

If you're a beauty therapist, you need to patch test your clients before certain treatments.

Patch testing is the most secure way to test a small amount of a substance on your client's skin to monitor their reaction to it.

If you've experienced allergic reactions when having beauty treatments in the past, it's essential you perform this step every time you have a treatment done, even if you're using a formulation that you've used previously. This is due to potential changes in formulations and ingredients which can vary from batch to batch.

Just because you haven't had an allergic reaction before, it doesn't mean you won't in the future as, annoyingly we can all develop new allergies at any stage of our lives.

So, although it can be inconvenient to have to go to the beauty salon a couple of days before your appointment, a patch test is designed to protect you from harm and is therefore an essential part of the treatment process.

12.2 Which Beauty Treatments Need A Patch Test?

It is recommended that you carry out a patch test before any of the following beauty treatments:

- Eyelash tint
- Eyebrow tint
- Lash extensions
- Eyelash perming
- Spray tanning
- Laser and IPL treatments
- Microblading
- Some peel treatments depending on the manufacturer

12.3 Why do I need to patch test clients?

If you perform tinting or dyeing services, you are legally obligated to perform patch testing on your clients under section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act. Failure to do so could render your insurance invalid, leaving you personally liable for any damages caused by an adverse reaction to the product

12.4 How often should client's hair be patch tested?

It is a requirement that a sensitivity patch test is carried out before certain treatments can be performed.

Any client that has a reaction to the patch test **must not** be allowed to have the full treatment.

Once a client has had a successful patch test, a repeat patch test is required if:

- More than six months has elapsed before the client last had a patch test or a treatment,
- The manufacturer of the products you are using stipulates that a patch test is required more frequently than every six months,
- Your client has had the COVID-19 infection, or
- Your client has had a COVID-19 vaccine or booster

12.5 Medical Conditions & Covid-19

A patch test should also be done if a client advises you of a change in their medical condition.

If a client has had a severe illness, including Covid-19 infection, they should be patch tested before a treatment can be given. If your client has had a COVID-19 vaccine or booster this is classed as a medical change and would require a patch test. A patch test after the second vaccination is not required unless the supplier of the product states otherwise.

If you are in any doubt, do a patch test before offering the treatment.

12.6 Should I Use A Consultation Form?

The purpose of a consultation form is to fully explain the risks of the treatment to your client.

It can be useful to create a consultation form to ensure your client understand what they're agreeing too, and by getting them to sign, you get confirmation that they're happy with the risks involved.

A consultation form should never be used in place of a patch. A patch test still needs to be completed on certain products in order to qualify for insurance.

However, the consultation form can act as a written record of the patch test and can also be used to record any previous allergic reactions experienced by the client, as well as any health problems and medication they may be taking.

Lash & Brow Tinting - Client Record Card

Surname:
Forename:
Date of Birth: Age:
Street:
Town:
Postcode:
Phone:
Mobile:
Email:
General Practitioner:
Phone:
Address:

Have you ever used hair colour before? ❑ Yes ❑ No
Have you ever had an allergic reaction to hair colour? ❑ Yes ❑ No
Do you have any known allergies? ❑ Yes ❑ No
Do you wear contact lenses? ❑ Yes ❑ No
Are you taking any medications? ❑ Yes ❑ No
Have you ever had your lashes/brows tinted? ❑ Yes ❑ No
Are you pregnant? ❑ Yes ❑ No
Any eye problems in the past 4 weeks? ❑ Yes ❑ No
Do you use eye products? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Date of skin sensitivity test:
Outcome of skin sensitivity test:
Type of eye makeup remover and mascara?

Note:

Appendix 1

COLOUR SKIN PATCH TEST

COLOUR CONSENT & WAIVER

(MUST BE AGREED & SIGNED BEFORE ALL COLOURS)

Date:..... No:.....

Salon Name:	
Salon Address:	
Customer Name	
Customer Address	
Customer Tel No	

- I am aware & understand that receiving any hair colour service can, in some individuals, cause an allergic reaction.
- I fully understand that this reaction can occur at anytime even if I have received this service on previous occasions.
- I further understand that it is the above-mentioned salons, policy to perform a skin patch test forty-eight (48) hours prior to all colour services.
- I also understand that a negative skin patch test does not mean that a reaction will not still occur.
- I understand these risks and if I have any concerns, I will seek medical advice prior to any colour service.
- Further, I grant the above-mentioned salon permission to colour my hair and not hold them responsible for any, and all adverse reactions from this service.

I ACCEPT A PATCH TEST: YES ☐ NO☐

I REFUSE A PATCH TEST: YES ☐ NO ☐

AREA OF PATCH TEST:		
CUSTOMER NAME (PRINT):		
CUSTOMER SIGNATURE:		DATE:
PATCH TEST RESULT:		
WITNESSED:		DATE:

12.7 Patch Testing For Lash, Brow, Tanning & Peel Treatments

- A patch test will need to be carried out a minimum of 48 hours prior to a colour application, once a negative result is received the patch test will be valid for 12 weeks.
- A complimentary consultation including the patch test will be booked prior to making the colour appointment.
- The beauty therapist will ask the client a series of questions which will identify if they are suitable to receive a patch test. It is important that the questions are answered honestly.
- All instances of the patch test should be recorded, the client should be asked to sign a patch test form which will show they have agreed to the patch test and keep it on file.
- A small amount of product will be applied behind the client's ear (clients should be asked to remove any earrings) or on the inner elbow.
- The product should be left for a minimum of 48 hrs. If the client has a positive reaction the area will become red, itchy and irritated or they may feel unwell. If the client receives a positive reaction, you should inform them to rinse the area immediately, contact the salon and seek medical advice.
- If there is a negative reaction nothing will happen, and it is safe for the client's treatment to take place.

12.8 Patch Testing For IPL Treatments

Patch tests carried out for IPL treatments are usually carried out as follows:

- A consultation will be carried out 48 hours before your IPL appointment, to see if you have any medical reasons or activities that may delay your treatment or prevent you from having the treatment done altogether.
- All instances of the patch test should be recorded, the client should be asked to sign a patch test form which will show they have agreed to the patch test and keep it on file.
- If you are pregnant, you cannot be treated.
- A patch test will then be carried out, where a small number of test shots will be performed in the treatment area, with slightly different machine settings to see how you respond. If you react badly, it may prevent you from having the treatment.

12.9 Patch Testing For Laser Hair Removal Treatments

Patch tests for laser hair removal treatments are usually carried out as follows:

All potential clients will undergo a full consultation prior to any laser hair removal treatment. This allows the practitioner to determine the following important factors:

- Contraindications (to ascertain if the procedure may be harmful to you)
- Skin type
- Hair type

During the consultation process, the therapist will discuss the following with you:

- If you are pregnant, if so, you cannot be treated.
- Treatment goals and expectations
- Current method of hair removal
- The hair cycle and skin
- How laser hair removal treatment works
- Different types of laser technology
- The treatment process and factors that will determine your results
- Details about your medical history (including any current medications)
- Pre-treatment requirements
- Aftercare requirements
- Cost and frequency of treatments
- Predicated results of the treatment

Once this is completed and you are happy to proceed the beauty therapist will seek your informed consent to undertake a patch test, or tests if you would like treatment on different areas.

A patch test is then carried out after conducting a consultation with the laser practitioner. This determines what the most effective settings for the laser parameters are in relation to your hair and skin type. A professional laser practitioner will effectively carry out a patch test for each and every area of treatment. This is because your hair and skin are not the same everywhere on your body.

The patch test is done 48 hours before your first treatment, so that any reactions have time to appear, and your treatment plan can be adjusted if necessary to ensure effective results with minimal side effects.

All instances of the patch test should be recorded, the client should be asked to sign a patch test form which will show they have agreed to the patch test and keep it on file.

12.10 Patch Testing For Microblading

- A patch test will need to be carried out a minimum of 48 hours prior to your appointment.
- A complimentary consultation including the patch test will be booked prior to making the colour appointment.
- The beauty therapist will ask the client a series of questions which will identify if they are suitable to receive a patch test. It is important that the questions are answered honestly.
- If you are pregnant, you cannot be treated.
- All instances of the patch test should be recorded, the client should be asked to sign a form which will show they have agreed to the patch test and keep it on file.

Numbing cream, pigments and aftercare products need to be tested before microblading treatments are carried out.

Since microblading implies both topical and intradermal application of products, each product needs to be tested the way it will be used as part of the procedure for the most accurate results.

- You will need to choose three test areas on the skin, one for each product. Behind the ear or the inner elbow are usually the desired areas.
- Dab a drop of the numbing cream on the chosen area first.
- Next, do a few strokes with the pigment. During the procedure, pigments will be implemented into the skin, so a scratch test will need to be carried out. As, broken skin can react much more severely to products than unbroken skin, this is why you need to test the pigments the way they'll be used.
- As some people are allergic to metals, the blade you are going to use also needs to be tested.
- Apply a small drop of aftercare cream onto the designated spot. Aftercare is the most common cause of post-microblading allergic reactions. Different formulas contain different ingredients. Oils are very common in aftercare, and many people are allergic to various types of plant oils (especially coconut oil), so aftercare should definitely be tested.

The products applied need to sit on the skin for at least 20 minutes to give accurate results. Usually, the client won't spend this much time at your salon, so make them aware not to wash off the products until 20 minutes have passed.

You should give them a small amount of aftercare to apply onto the strokes to protect the cuts and also to test the use of aftercare on broken skin.

The client should be made aware to be careful with the strokes as broken skin can get irritated or infected. They should avoid harsh products getting in contact with them.

Instruct them to contact you if they notice any reactions to the microblading patch test so you can decide whether to go ahead with the treatment or not.

12.11 What Could Happen If A Patch Test Isn't Done?

If a patch test doesn't take place, your client could have a serious reaction. It could just be an itchy rash or some painful localised swelling. But in extreme cases their eyes might swell up so much they can't see, they could have trouble breathing, or their skin could react so badly that they're left with a permanent scarring.

12.12 Black Henna Tattoos

It's very important that you ask your client if they've had a black henna tattoo since their last allergy alert test. This is because black henna often contains illegally high levels of the chemical PPD (paraphenylenediamine).

Clients who have had black henna tattoos can subsequently become very sensitive to PPD in dyes – even if it's a dye they've had many times before.

The NHS has issued warnings about black henna tattoos. One woman died from a serious anaphylactic reaction when using dye after having a black henna tattoo five *years* earlier.

..\..\..\..\OneDrive\Pictures\Saved Pictures\Patch Test\BBC News – Julie McCabe hair dye death sparks black henna tattoo warning.html

12.13 What Does Patch Testing Test For?

Patch testing is the safest way to test whether your client is prone to a skin reaction called 'contact dermatitis'. This is a type of skin sensitivity that can be triggered when the skin comes into direct contact with certain ingredients. It often results in itching, dryness and irritation that can also cause swelling.

One of the most common causes of contact dermatitis is a chemical called paraphenylenediamine (PPD). This is present in over 99% of dyes. Allergies to PPD can occur even when the client has had no previous reaction to it before as they can develop over time. A severe allergic reaction to PPD can also result in allergies to other substances that have never been present before.

However, it's not just dyes containing PPD that you need to patch test for. Some beauty therapists assume products labelled as 'natural' or 'organic' don't require a patch test. This is incorrect – every dye, tint or chemical that will come into contact with the skin needs to be patch tested first.

12.14 What If A Client Refuses A Patch Test?

You should not feel pressured by a client into carrying out a treatment without a patch test, or by undertaking a treatment after a reaction to a patch test. Explain that patch testing is a requirement of undergoing a dying or perming treatment at your beauty salon, and this is in line with standard industry practice. Do not treat a client that refuses a patch test.

As an industry professional, you have a responsibility to the wellbeing of your client, but you also have a responsibility to yourself and your business. It is better to lose a client by refusing to treat them, than leaving yourself liable to legal action and the financial consequences of this.

Legal advice states that if you agree with a client to circumvent any warranted procedure (i.e., a client refuses a patch test and you go on to perform a treatment that requires a patch test, even if the client signs a waiver), courts will usually award damages against you in any claim then made. In such circumstances, your insurance policy would be invalid.

12.15 Signs And Symptoms Of A Hair Dye Reaction

Reactions to PPD can range from mild irritation to an allergic reaction that can potentially trigger serious symptoms throughout the body.

Mild Irritation – If you're mildly irritated by PPD, you may find that your scalp, neck, forehead, ears and eyelids become irritated and inflamed after using dye.

The skin exposed to the PPD may become red, swollen, blistered, dry, thickened and cracked. You may feel a burning or stinging sensation.

Symptoms will usually appear within 48 hours, although strong irritants can cause your skin to react immediately.

Allergic Reaction – If you're allergic to PPD, your scalp and face may feel itchy and start to swell.

PPD may also trigger symptoms throughout your body, such as itching, a nettle rash and generally feeling ill.

These symptoms may not develop until hours or even days later.

A severe allergic reaction that develops within minutes is called anaphylaxis or "anaphylactic shock". Signs of anaphylaxis include:

- Itchy skin or a raised, red skin rash
- Swollen eyes, lips, hands and feet – the eyelids can swell so much that the eyes close
- Feeling lightheaded or faint
- Swelling of the mouth, throat or tongue, which can cause breathing and swallowing difficulties
- Wheezing
- Tummy pain, nausea and vomiting
- Collapsing and becoming unconscious

12.16 What To Do If You Have A Reaction

Dial 999 for an ambulance if you think you or someone, you're with is having a severe allergic reaction. Give an adrenaline injection if you have one.

If you think you're experiencing a reaction but it's not an emergency, follow this advice:

Relieving mild symptoms

- Wash the area thoroughly with mild soap to remove any excess product
- Try gently applying an emollient (moisturising treatment) such as aqueous cream or petroleum jelly to the affected skin

Steroid cream
If your skin is very red, sore and inflamed, you may need to try a steroid cream. You can buy a mild steroid cream at a pharmacy, or a GP may prescribe it.

Antihistamine medicines
Medicines called antihistamines can help reduce skin inflammation and itching. A pharmacist or GP will be able to recommend an antihistamine for you.

Avoiding products with PPD
If you develop a reaction to dye, even just a mild one, you should stop using products containing PPD altogether, as there's a risk you could develop a more severe reaction in the future.

Try switching to a safer alternative, such as a non-permanent, PPD-free dye – but be aware that it's still possible to develop a reaction to this.

12.17 Patch Testing In Pregnancy

Patch tests are vital in pregnancy, as hormone changes can cause heightened sensitivity to ingredients. Skin test with the exact product you're going to use; that way there's no room for error.

Talk through all the options with your client, and suggest she speaks to her GP or midwife first if she has any doubts, or has sensitive skin, has reacted in the past, or an underlying medical issue.

12.18 Should Salons Offer Treatments To Under 16's

Within the salon there may become a time when somebody under the age of 16 requests treatments.

Each salon will have their own standing on this issue; however, the general consensus is that all minors' wishing to have treatments need to have written/signed consent from a parent or guardian, stating that they are happy for the treatment to go ahead.

Although it is not law to have a responsible adult present when carrying out treatments, for example waxing or facials, it is advisable. Some parents/guardians are happy to have the treatment go ahead without them being present if this happens then insist that an appropriate adult is present throughout the treatment especially if they are under the age of 16. This ensures that they are witnessing your actions at all times.

If working within a salon, then make a colleague aware that you are treating a minor as they can be in the proximity if a situation arises. This ensures both the safety of the young client and also of yourself.
Each salon will have their own policy and procedures on treating minors. Be aware of who you are carrying out treatments on and where they are taking place, e.g., in a public area doing a nail service or in a private room doing a waxing treatment.

Some salons will not perform any beauty treatments on those under the age of 16 or will limit the type of services that can be performed.

As there is no legal minimum age at which a person can receive treatments, it is down to the therapist themselves to ensure that they are practicing in accordance to a number of Government Guidelines and Acts that are concerned with the welfare and safety of children.

Not only do you need the consent of the responsible adult but also the child themselves. This ensure that they are wanting the treatment on a voluntary basis, and they have not been pushed onto making a decision by someone else. If the child makes any indication that they do not wish to have a treatment, then you should not treat them under any circumstances. If they are happy to proceed, then it is imperative that you outline to the child what the treatment will involve and aftercare.

As a therapist it is your responsibility to ensure that the young client understands everything before they consent to the treatment. This means providing a simple but thorough and honest explanation of what to expect before, during and after the treatment. It may help to show them the products or equipment you are going to use explaining what it does, give them a taster of what the treatment will feel like, particularly if it going to involve a degree of pain, e.g., waxing. Providing written information that they can look through and discuss with their parents/guardian at home may also be useful.

Make it clear to them that they are entitled to change their mind at any point. Asking them if they are 'OK' and 'comfortable' throughout the treatment is also good practice, as you are then giving the client the opportunity to query or stop the treatment if they are at all unhappy. If at any point they ask you to stop then do so immediately, your priority is not to get the job 'finished' – it is to uphold the health, safety and well-being of the client.

If you are concerned that the parent or guardian has not given consent, then it will not be unreasonable to contact the parent to confirm they have read and completed the letter themselves.

Remember, you are not obliged to treat any client, irrespective of who have given consent. If you believe that a treatment is unethical, inappropriate or potentially unsafe for somebody under the age of 16, then do not carry out the treatment.

12.19 Further information

Appendix 1 – Colour Skin Patch Test Document

COLOUR SKIN PATCH TEST
COLOUR CONSENT & WAIVER

(MUST BE AGREED & SIGNED BEFORE ALL COLOURS)

Date:…… **No:……**

Salon Name:	
Salon Address:	
Customer Name	
Customer Address	
Customer Tel No	

- **I am aware & understand that receiving any hair colour service can, in some individuals, cause an allergic reaction.**
- **I fully understand that this reaction can occur at anytime even if I have received this service on previous occasions.**
- **I further understand that it is the above-mentioned salons, policy to perform a skin patch test forty-eight (48) hours prior to all colour services.**
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- **I understand these risks and if I have any concerns, I will seek medical advice prior to any colour service.**
- **Further, I grant the above-mentioned salon permission to colour my hair and not hold them responsible for any, and all adverse reactions from this service.**

I ACCEPT A PATCH TEST: YES ☐ NO☐

I REFUSE A PATCH TEST: YES ☐ NO ☐

AREA OF PATCH TEST:		
CUSTOMER NAME (PRINT):		
CUSTOMER SIGNATURE:		**DATE:**
PATCH TEST RESULT:		
WITNESSED:		**DATE:**