

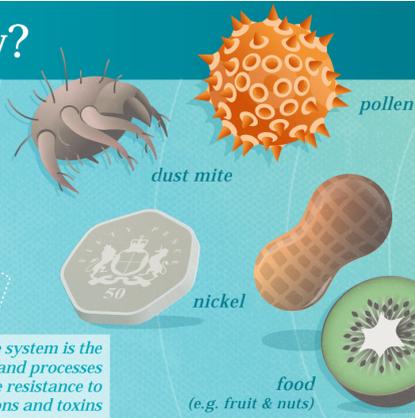


» What is allergy?

An allergy is the response of the body's immune system to normally harmless substances.

You can become allergic to almost anything - from naturally occurring substances to man-made ones

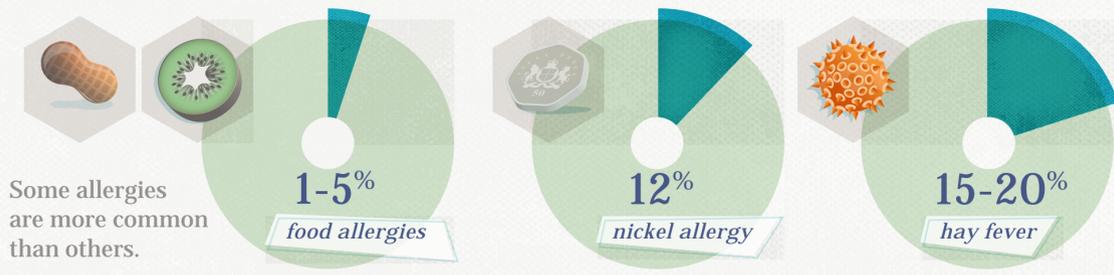
The immune system is the body's organs and processes that provide resistance to infections and toxins



Whilst in most people these substances pose no problem, in allergic people the immune system identifies them as a threat and produces an unexpected response. These substances are known as allergens.



Some allergies are quite common and will affect 1 in 3 at some point in their lives.



Some allergies are more common than others.

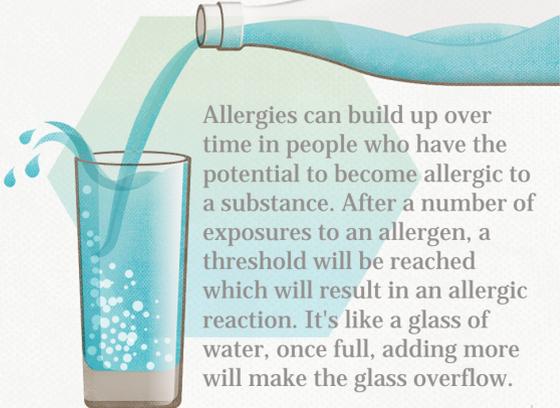
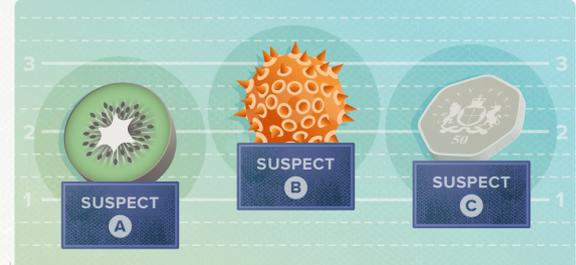
» How does it work?

Everyone is different – what you will become allergic to is determined by your genes. Some people may never develop an allergy.

Genes are what makes you you - from eye colour, to blood type



Allergic reactions cannot occur after the first or a single exposure. The immune system has a memory. It has to have met the allergen before and classed it as harmful to recognise it again and react.



Allergies can build up over time in people who have the potential to become allergic to a substance. After a number of exposures to an allergen, a threshold will be reached which will result in an allergic reaction. It's like a glass of water, once full, adding more will make the glass overflow.

There are different types of allergic reactions.

Some are immediate



Some are delayed and will appear in the area of contact after 24-72 hours



» What about ingredients in cosmetic products?

People can even be allergic to commonly used products. It's not that ingredients in these are unsafe – it's the way the body reacts to them can differ from person to person.

The process of determining the safety and composition of a product is rigorous and great care is taken to constantly re-assess the science behind it. This means a team of scientists will be involved ensuring the latest scientific knowledge and safety evaluation techniques are used. It can take many years to bring a product to market.

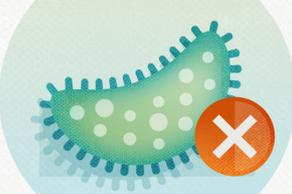
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The number of reactions to permanent hair dyes e.g. para-phenylenediamine (PPD) is very low. These dyes are used because they are the best way to achieve permanent hair colour and the only way of colouring grey hair. They are safe to use when instructions are followed, including an Allergy Alert Test.

Although rare, reactions to fragrances sometimes occur. All cosmetics that contain fragrances will be labelled 'parfum' in the ingredients list.

There is a small pool of effective preservatives that are allowed to be used in cosmetics. They are needed to keep products bug-free, but unfortunately some people may be allergic to one or more of them. Only a few have the rare quality of being able to work across a variety of products in order to keep them safe and microorganism-free without changing the formulation which creates the look, feel and smell.



It's like making a cake; you need to choose the right ingredients in the right quantities to make sure your cake has the right smell, texture and taste. It's very difficult to substitute an ingredient without changing the look, feel or effectiveness.



» Think you've had an allergic reaction to a product?

Go and see your GP for further information



Once the allergen has been identified, you will be able to avoid it by checking the ingredients list

Ingredients are listed with the same names across Europe



Contact the manufacturer - they will be able to advise you



Always perform an Allergy Alert Test every time you colour your hair

See below

How to do an Allergy Alert Test when colouring your hair



Under 2% of the population has the potential to become allergic to ingredients in hair colorants. But as allergies may develop over time, an Allergy Alert Test should be carried out each time you colour your hair.



Always read and follow the manufacturer's instructions found in the pack.



You DO NOT need to buy a second pack to do the Allergy Alert Test. Just re-close the packs after taking out a small amount, mixed or not as instructed.



Apply a small amount of the mixture behind your ear or in the inner elbow as instructed.



Look for red swollen hot itching painful

Hair dyes are 'delayed contact allergies' so can take this long to show up. If you react to the Allergy Alert Test DO NOT go on to colour your hair.