

# Hair Smoothing Products & Formaldehyde

Some hair smoothing or straightening products

contain or release formaldehyde (a chemical).

When such products are heated, formaldehyde gas is released into the air. Breathing in formaldehyde gas can be harmful and cause immediate reactions ranging from irritation of the eyes and throat to coughing, wheezing, or chest pain to chronic or long-term problems such as more frequent headaches, asthma, skin irritation, and allergic reactions, and possibly cancer.




## If You Are Thinking About Using Hair Smoothing Products:

### 1. Read the label.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) discourages consumers from buying and using hair smoothing products containing formaldehyde or related ingredients for home use. If you are buying a hair smoothing product at a store or online, the product is required by law to have a list of the ingredients. If a product doesn't include a list of ingredients, the FDA recommends that you do not buy the product.



To find out if a hair smoothing product includes formaldehyde-related ingredients, look for:

-  **Formaldehyde**
-  **Formalin**
-  **Methylene glycol**

### 2. Ask your salon professional.

Ask your salon professional if the product has formaldehyde, and if they have an ingredient list or Safety Data Sheet that you can review. You can also ask if they can use an alternative hair smoothing product that does not release formaldehyde when heated.

### 3. Report bad reactions.

If you experience a bad reaction to a hair smoothing product, stop using the product and report your symptoms to your health care provider.

You can also report your symptoms to the FDA in either of these ways:

- Contact the Consumer Complaint Coordinator in your area. Locate one here:

<http://www.fda.gov/Safety/ReportaProblem/ConsumerComplaintCoordinators>

- Contact MedWatch by phone (1-800-FDA-1088) or online by filing a voluntary report at:

<http://www.fda.gov/medwatch>