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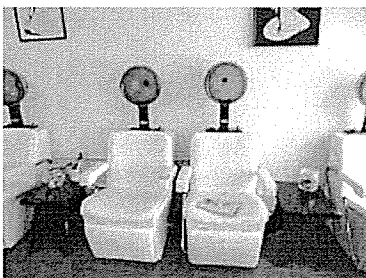
BUSINESS

Government Issues Health Warning for Line of Salon Hair Straightening Products

The Department of Public Health is warning the public about hair straightening products containing formaldehyde and similar chemicals.

By Christine Brophy January 24, 2011

For women with curly or wavy hair, a blowout to straighten hair can be a perfect change of pace. But a new health warning suggests that the formaldehyde found in certain hair straightening products, such as Brazilian Blowout Professional Solution, can cause health problems.



Brazilian Blowout, the manufacturer of the product, which is marketed as "formaldehyde free," disputes claims of formaldehyde in its product. The manufacturer has recently stated on its website that it filed a lawsuit against Oregon's Occupational Safety and Health Administration, claiming test results of the product were manipulated.



"Reports of the presence of formaldehyde in these products is troubling, especially because some of them are marketed as 'formaldehyde free,'" Connecticut Department of Public Health

Commissioner Dr. J. Robert Galvin said in a statement in December. "Our current recommendation to salon owners and workers is to discontinue the use of these products until they are reformulated and further research determines they are safe to use."

Symptoms being reported as a result of using products containing formaldehyde include burning eyes, nose and throat, breathing difficulties, chest heaviness, sore throat and fatigue. Other ingredients to look out for in keratin-based hair straighteners include methylene glycol or formalin.

According to Health Canada, the country's federal health agency, methylene glycol and formalin are the liquid form of formaldehyde. Formaldehyde is released from products as a gas during flat ironing or blow drying and can be inhaled.

"The manufacturer should be sending out recall notices," Stamford Health Laboratory Director Robert Murray, told Patch. "It's a possibility we may be contacting licensed salons in Stamford just to make sure they've received the notice."

Some salons are already aware of the health warnings surrounding the product Brazilian Blowout Professional Solution.

"We don't use that because it has known carcinogens in it," stylist Dee Cardiollo at New Crescent Beauty Salon (<http://stamford.patch.com/listings/new-crescent-beauty-salon>) told Patch. "For straightening, we use products that have been around for years. People might dispute it. But, once you use it, you can't take it back. I like to use a product that is easier on the environment as well as our well-being."

It's not known if or how many salons in the city are using products with these ingredients. Concerned consumers can ask their stylist. If ingredients aren't listed on product labels, the Department of Public Health suggests that salon owners ask the distributor for the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS).

For more information about the health effects of formaldehyde in straightening products, contact the Connecticut Department of Public Health's Occupational Health Unit at (860) 509-7740 or go to www.ct.gov/dph/occupationalhealth (<http://www.ct.gov/dph/occupationalhealth>).

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