

Is it safe to use hair dye when I'm pregnant or breastfeeding?

The chemicals in permanent and semi-permanent hair dyes are not highly toxic. Most research, although limited, shows that it's safe to colour your hair while pregnant.

Some studies have found that very high doses of the chemicals in hair dyes may cause harm. However, these doses are massive compared to the very low amount of chemicals a woman is exposed to when colouring her hair.

Using hair dye when you're pregnant

Many women decide to wait to dye their hair until after the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, when the risk of chemical substances harming the baby is much lower. If you're colouring your hair yourself, you can reduce the risk further by making sure that you:

- wear gloves
- leave the dye on for the minimum time
- work in a well-ventilated room
- rinse your scalp once the dye is applied

Highlighting your hair, by putting the dye only onto strands of hair, also reduces any risk. The chemicals used are only absorbed by your hair, and not by your scalp or bloodstream.

Semi-permanent pure vegetable dyes, such as henna, are a safe alternative.

Do remember that pregnancy can affect your hair's normal condition. For example, your hair may:

- react differently to colouring or perming than it usually does
- become more or less absorbent, frizzy or unpredictable

It's always a good idea to do a strand test first, using the hair dye or treatment that you intend to use. Speak to your hairdresser for advice.

Using hair dye while you're breastfeeding

Information about hair treatments while breastfeeding is limited. However, it's very unlikely that a significant amount of the chemicals used in hair dyes will be passed on through your breast milk. This is because very little enters your bloodstream. In the past, many women have used hair treatments while breastfeeding, with no known negative results.

Further information:

- [Is it safe to use fake tan during pregnancy?](#)
- [Your pregnancy and baby guide](#)

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