Dermatitis in Hairdressing
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Additional Training Unit
This training unit has been designed to support you with the recommendations for ensuring good practice in accordance with the Health & Safety Executive Bad Hand Day campaign.

Trainer Notes
Within the notes you will be directed when to use the relevant learner handouts and PowerPoint presentation. You will find a margin at the side of the trainer notes in which to make your own annotations to aid your delivery.

Trainer Summary
At the end of the trainer notes a trainer summary can be found. This section summarises the main points of the delivery notes and can be used to round up the teaching session. At the end of the session you will have the opportunity to check the learners’ understanding by using the Learner Check for the session.

Learner Handouts
Within the trainer notes you will be directed to issue the learners with handouts. The handouts can be downloaded from the CD Rom. Each of the handouts are identified by a reference number.
Introduction

Dermatitis in Hairdressers

Introduction to the unit.

The aim of this unit is to increase the learner’s awareness of contact dermatitis as a risk in hairdressing. This includes information on the signs and symptoms of dermatitis, what causes it and the simple steps to take to prevent it.

Unit Content

To study this unit successfully the learner needs to know and understand:

1. How to recognise and describe the signs of contact dermatitis, both allergic and irritant.
2. How to identify the substances and services that can cause dermatitis.
3. How to prevent dermatitis, following ‘the five simple steps’.

To cover the knowledge requirements it is recommended that this unit is taught over a session of 1 hour, taking into account any questions and answer time you may wish to build into the session.
Dermatitis in Hairdressing

Trainer requirements to teach this session

For this session you will need the following:

- Ref 1  Handout/PowerPoint slide ‘What is contact dermatitis?’
- Ref 2  Handout ‘Skin checks for dermatitis’
- Ref 3  PowerPoint of Miriam (on CD)
- Ref 4  Handout ‘How to prevent dermatitis’
- Ref 5  Handout ‘Skin care’
- Ref 6  Handout ‘Correct removal of gloves’
- Ref 7  Handout ‘Myth buster’
1. **How to recognise and describe the signs of contact dermatitis, both allergic and irritant.**

**What is Dermatitis?**

Explain to learners that contact dermatitis can be a significant problem for all hairdressers; tell them they are much more likely to develop dermatitis than any other group of workers. However it is important to point out that contact dermatitis is easily preventable and should not be accepted as a ‘normal’ part of the job.

Reassure the learners; tell them dermatitis is not ‘catching’ – it can’t be passed from one person to another. Explain it can develop at any time, or not at all – everyone is different.

Explain that ‘contact dermatitis’ is an inflammatory condition of the skin caused by using substances such as colours and frequent use of shampoos in conjunction with water. State that reasonable care should be taken to protect the skin against substances penetrating the protective layer of the skin’s surface.

Tell the learners that the main signs and symptoms of dermatitis are redness, dryness, itching, swelling, blistering, flaking and cracking. It can be painful. Explain it is also possible to get a secondary infection in the cracked/broken skin.

Explain to learners that there are two types of contact dermatitis;
- irritant contact dermatitis
- allergic contact dermatitis
- explain they could get one, the other or both.
Ask the learners if they know anyone that suffers from either type of contact dermatitis.

Possible answers should include:
• themselves or colleagues – if they work in salons
• friends and family.

Irritant contact dermatitis

Explain to learners that substances, such as frequent use of shampoos in conjunction with water, are capable of causing damage to the skin if used repeatedly.

In addition, explain that ‘irritant contact dermatitis’ can flare up after a single exposure or after a few contacts with strong irritants such as bleach.

Emphasise that it can develop gradually through frequent wet working, using milder chemicals like shampoo. State that a person who has experienced childhood eczema is also more susceptible to the effects of irritants, and is therefore more likely to develop irritant contact dermatitis.

Allergic contact dermatitis

Explain that a skin sensitiser, or allergen, is a substance capable of causing ‘allergic contact dermatitis.’ Skin sensitisers such as hair colourants can induce a process known as contact sensitisation by penetrating the protective layer of the skin, which may finally result in an allergic reaction (allergic contact dermatitis).

It is important to point out to learners that allergic contact dermatitis can develop quickly after only a few contacts with a substance, for example colourants. Explain that sometimes it can take months or even years for the allergy to develop and that once you are allergic, you may be allergic for life.
Point out that an allergy can develop at any time, even if you have never experienced skin problems before.

Tell the learners that the products or chemicals they use at work might well be used at home – such as shampoo, or household cleaners. So, if they become allergic to something in the salon it could well affect all aspects of their life.

Ref 3: PowerPoint of Miriam

Ask learners if they are aware of the types of hairdressing substances or services that could cause dermatitis.

Possible answers should include:
• shampoo
• colourants
• perm lotion
• neutralisers
• cleaning substances.

Discuss with the learners ‘How they think contact dermatitis could be avoided’.

2. How to identify the substances and services that can cause dermatitis.

What causes dermatitis in hairdressers?

Explain to learners that one of the main causes of dermatitis is wet working. State they are more at risk of developing irritant contact dermatitis if their hands are in contact with water and soaps/shampoos for long periods in a day.
Ask learners what they think is meant by the term ‘long periods’.

Explain that, as a guide, ‘long periods’ of wet working is over 2 hours in one day, or if your hands are wet several times a day. Use as an example: if you shampoo around 10 clients a day or more. Explain that this is why trainee hairdressers who spend their time doing a lot of the shampooing are more at risk.

Explain another cause of dermatitis is ‘contact’ through applying and removing hairdressing chemicals such as colour, bleach, perm lotion and neutraliser.

Some other examples are:
• touching contaminated clothing (e.g. gowns or towels), tools (e.g. combs or scissors) or containers (e.g. bottles).
• splashing chemicals like colours on to your skin when mixing or handling them.
• aerosols and dust from spray or powder products landing on your skin and on surfaces that you might touch.

Tell the learners that chemicals used in colours could also lead to allergic contact dermatitis; one well known allergen is PPD (paraphenylenediamine), which is found in many colouring products.

Remind the learners not to forget the products used for cleaning up. These also contain chemicals that could affect the skin.

Tell learners if they want to find out more about the ingredients in products and how they could affect their skin, to ask their salon manager or refer to the suppliers or manufacturers instructions.
3. How to prevent dermatitis, following ‘the five simple steps’.

How to prevent dermatitis

Ref 4: Handout ‘How to prevent dermatitis, 5 simple steps’

Explain to the learners that there are 5 simple steps which can be used to help prevent dermatitis.

Explain the 5 simple steps, as follows:

**Step 1.**
Wear disposable nitrile or vinyl gloves when shampooing, applying or removing colour, bleach, etc.

Explain to learners that it is important to prevent the chemicals coming into contact with their skin and wearing gloves is the only practical way to do this. State that there are specific types, materials and lengths of gloves they should wear, refer to leaflet/poster.

In addition, tell learners the importance of avoiding latex gloves, as latex itself can cause an allergy.

**Step 2.**
Explain to learners that they should dry their hands thoroughly with a soft cotton or paper towel. Explain that using a soft, clean, dry towel will be kinder to their hands and prevent any contamination from used towels.

**Step 3.**
They should moisturise, after washing their hands, as well as at the start and end of each day. Explain that it’s easy to miss fingertips, finger webs and wrists. Regularly replacing lost moisture will help to keep their skin healthy.
Ref 5: Handout ‘Skin care’

Step 4.
Change gloves between clients. Make sure they don’t contaminate their hands when they take them off. Remind learners it is very easy to get product on their hands without realising it, if they don’t take the gloves off properly. Also, changing gloves between clients gives hands a chance to breathe, as well as being more hygienic for their clients.

Ref 6: Handout ‘Correct removal of gloves’

Step 5.
Check skin regularly for early signs of dermatitis.

Ref 2: Handout ‘Skin checks for dermatitis’

Using the handout explain to the learners that the earlier they spot the signs of dermatitis, the easier it is to do something about it before it becomes a serious problem. Tell them they should report any problems to the salon manager, who should then check the preventative measures in place in the salon and advise them to see their GP. Learners may have some preconceptions regarding the use of gloves.

Ref 7: Handout ‘Myth buster’

Explain to learners that many of these are myths; the right kind of glove should not pull or snag clients’ hair.

Use the learner check to check the understanding of the learner
Dermatitis in Hairdressers

Learner Check

1. What are some of the signs of contact dermatitis?
   a. dryness, redness, cracking
   b. wetness, rash, cuts
   c. bleeding, contagious
   d. fever, headache
   e. swelling, sickness, temperature

2. Which of the following could be the cause of dermatitis?
   a. wet working, cutting hair, plaiting hair
   b. blow drying, setting, shampoo
   c. cutting hair, shampoo, combing
   d. chemicals, shampoo, wet working
   e. moisturisers, wet working, blow drying

3. How can you prevent dermatitis?
   a. wash your hands regularly
   b. wear nitrile disposable gloves
   c. wear latex disposable gloves
   d. wear the same disposable gloves for each client
   e. let your hands ‘air dry’ after washing
Dermatitis in Hairdressing

Trainer Summary

1. How to recognise and describe the signs of contact dermatitis, both allergic and irritant.

Reiterate that:

Irritant contact dermatitis; A skin irritant such as shampoo, is capable of causing damage to the skin if used repeatedly.

Allergic contact dermatitis: A skin sensitiser, or allergen, (for example – colourants) is a substance capable of causing allergic contact dermatitis.

Remind learners that both types of contact dermatitis may look exactly the same and the signs and symptoms of dermatitis are:

- dryness
- redness
- itching
- flaking/scaling
- cracking/blistering
- pain.

2. How to identify the substances and services that can cause dermatitis

Remind learners of the products and services that can cause dermatitis – one of the main causes of dermatitis is wet working. Another is exposure to sensitising chemicals, such as those found in colourants.

Remind learners they are more at risk of developing irritant contact dermatitis if their hands are in contact with water and soaps/shampoos for long periods in a day.
3. How to prevent dermatitis, using ‘the five simple steps’.

Remind learners of the procedures which can be used to help prevent dermatitis

- the 5 simple steps
- types of gloves
- skin care
- removal of gloves.
What is contact dermatitis?

Inflamed skin that leads to:
- dryness
- redness
- itching
- scaling/flaking
- cracking/blistering
- pain.
Skin checks for dermatitis

Regularly check your skin for early signs of dermatitis

Look for...

Dryness
Itching
Redness

...which can develop into flaking, scaling cracks, swelling and blisters

If you think you may have dermatitis, report it to your employer

Contact name _________________________

Your employer may need to refer you to an Occupational Health Doctor or Nurse

www.hse.gov.uk
Preventing Dermatitis: Salon Checklist

Step 1. Wear disposable non-latex gloves.
- Choose a longer-length glove – folding the cuff back to stop water running down the arms
- Pick a smooth glove to stop hair snagging
- Have different sized gloves available and ensure a good fit
- Show staff how to remove gloves by peeling them down from the cuff, while avoiding touching the skin with the used glove
- Make sure gloves are worn for cleaning spills
- Rotate jobs to minimise exposure for each member of staff
  www.hse.gov.uk/skin/posters/singleusegloves.pdf

Step 2. Dry your hands thoroughly with a soft cotton or paper towel.
- Provide soft cotton or paper towels for drying hands
- Tell staff about the importance of thorough hand drying as part of their skin care regime

Step 3. Moisturise after washing your hands, as well as at the start and end of each day.
- Provide moisturising cream in a dispenser or give each of your staff their own supply
- Choose fragrance-free moisturisers, as some people can be sensitive to perfumes
- Encourage staff to make sure all areas are covered – it’s easy to miss fingertips, finger webs and wrists: www.hse.gov.uk/skin/posters/skinmethod.pdf

Step 4. Change gloves between clients.
- Make sure staff don’t reuse gloves – the skin can be contaminated if you try to put them back on
- Advise your staff to change gloves between clients – this gives skin a chance to ‘air’

Step 5. Check skin regularly for early signs of dermatitis.
- Get into the habit of checking your own skin and reminding staff to check theirs: www.hse.gov.uk/skin/posters/skindermatitis.pdf

Handout Ref 4

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www.badhandday.hse.gov.uk
Skin Care
Method for using hand cream, soap and cleanser

Follow the steps shown:

- Palm to palm
- Palm to back, fingers overlaced
- Palm to palm fingers interlaced
- Palm Back
- Fingers interlocked
- Palm to palm fingers interlaced
- Palm to palm
- Rubbing of each wrist
- Rotational rubbing of fingertips in palm
- Rotational rubbing of thumb in palm
- Ensure shaded areas are not missed

Apply hand cream or wash with soap/cleanser
Correct removal of gloves
Single use gloves (splash resistant)

Follow the steps shown

Remove gloves carefully to protect your skin from contamination

Dispose of gloves in a suitable container

www.hse.gov.uk/printing
Let’s dispel a few myths.

1. Gloves snag clients’ hair.
   Snagging is unlikely if your gloves are smooth, non-latex and longer-length, as recommended by HSE, and if your gloves fit snugly.

2. Clients object to gloves.
   Many people understand the importance of skin care and would have no objection to gloves.

3. Gloves cut into profit margins.
   A pair of disposable non-latex gloves costs less than 10p, a very small proportion of the cost of a haircut/hair treatment. However, the costs associated with dermatitis could be considerable – you could lose clients, lose staff to sickness and in some cases lose staff for good.

4. Gloves make it difficult to detect water temperature.
   Disposable non-latex gloves are made of lightweight material and, if they fit well, allow you to feel the temperature as you mix.

5. Some hand creams can act as barriers.
   There are no true ‘barrier’ creams: chemicals will always reach the skin. However, moisturising creams used regularly as part of a skin care regime will help keep skin hydrated and supple, preventing dermatitis.

6. You need to toughen-up your hands by avoiding gloves.
   Tough, hardened skin = damaged skin. Hardening is not an answer and will not prevent dermatitis.

7. Latex gloves are best.
   Latex gloves can cause skin reactions and asthma. Many people, perhaps including your clients, are allergic to latex. In extreme cases people have died through anaphylactic shock from exposure to latex.

www.badhandday.hse.gov.uk
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