

Troubleshooting: I Itch

Many products labeled ‘henna’ contain unlabeled chemicals, additives, and adulterants that cause allergic reactions. Allergic reaction to pure henna is extremely rare but it does occur.¹ Dermatologists conclude that henna is one of the safest things you can put on yourself.² Symptoms of an allergic reaction to pure henna are intense itching, wheezing, shortness of breath, and welts or hives on the body. This reaction occurs within a few hours of henna application. Every batch of Ancient Sunrise® henna is tested by an independent certified laboratory for purity, and in our experience, we have found that very few people have allergic to pure henna: about one in 100,000 Ancient Sunrise® clients appear to be allergic to henna. If you have this reaction, consult your physician; your physician can determine whether you are allergic to henna or if something else has caused the problem. If your physician determines by a patch test that you are allergic to pure henna, do not use henna again.

There some allergic symptoms that may arise from contact with henna when one has seasonal hay fever. When finely powdered plant particles such as henna, cassia, or indigo are inhaled by an individual with a sensitized immune system (such as a person who suffers from hay fever), the particles may trigger the production of the antibody immunoglobulin E (IgE), which binds to mast cells and basophils containing histamine. These symptoms of sensitivity to small plant particles are watering and itching of eyes, a runny nose and itchy skin.³ If you have these symptoms, consider whether they may be related to hay fever. If you are experiencing hay fever, your antigen levels are very high and you may react to plant powders, such as henna, which would not normally bother you. If you react to henna when you are having other hay fever (allergic rhinitis) symptoms you might have less of a problem in seasons with fewer plant particles and pollen in the air.

If you have an itching reaction to henna, indigo, or cassia occasionally and not at other times, suspect an interaction with hay fever. When you don’t have hay fever, you will probably not have a reaction to henna. A few hay fever sufferers will have mild itching every time they use henna. Some people can avoid the sniffing, eye-watering reaction to henna by having another person mix the henna or indigo powder, so they don’t inhale the plant pollen and powder. If you are concerned, ask your doctor to do a patch test with pure henna, indigo, or cassia, whichever you think might be causing the problem.

Similar allergy-like symptoms may occur when one has the cold or flu, but a fever accompanies cold and flu. If you have watery, itchy eyes, a stuffed up nose, and the other symptoms of an allergic reaction to seasonal plants, a temporary sensitivity to henna may be ‘piggy-backing’ on a

¹ Belhadjali, H., Ghannouchi, N., Amri, C., Youssef, M., Amri, M, and Zili, J. “Contact dermatitis to henna used as a hair dye” *Contact Dermatitis* 2008: 58: 182

² Wolf, R., Wolf, D., Matz, H., Orion, E. “Cutaneous reactions to temporary tattoos.” *Dermatology Online Journal*, 2003: 9: 3.

³ Perez, R. G., Gonzalez, R., Gonzalez, M., Soloeta, R. “Palpebral eczema due to contact allergy to henna used as a hair dye” *Contact Dermatitis* 2003: 48: 238

case of allergic rhinitis. If you have a stuffy nose, watery eyes, congestions, and a fever, you probably have a cold or flu unrelated to henna.

If you have itching following henna apart from seasonal allergies, you might be having a skin irritation from your acidic mix or something else you've mixed into henna. Citrus allergies are not uncommon, and they tend to be caused by the oils in the citrus peel. If peel has gotten into the crushing machine while extracting juice for bottled henna, you may itch. If you have skin irritation caused by citrus juice or citric acid, use a different acid for dye release.

If you mix coconut milk into your henna and you itch, you may have an allergy to coconut. Coconut milk can cause contact allergic dermatitis.⁴ If you suspect that the coconut milk has caused itching, don't use coconut milk in your henna mix. If you mix your henna with cranberry juice, and your skin itches, you may have benzoate sensitivity. Cranberries naturally have very high levels of benzoates. If you suspect that cranberry juice is causing skin irritation and itching, use a different mild acid to mix your henna.

Ancient Sunrise® Kristalovino and Ancient Sunrise® Malluma Kristalovino, diprotic acid and potassium bitartrate are the most skin-friendly acid you can use to mix your henna. These are mild acids naturally produced in grapes and bananas, and often used in cooking.⁵

If your scalp is abraded, or has cuts and scrapes, delay applying henna until the skin heals. Ancient Sunrise® henna, indigo, and cassia are tested for purity, but they're not sterile.

Some people who have dandruff⁶ have an itching reaction when they first use henna: henna eliminates dandruff when caused by a yeast-like fungus⁷, because henna is active against fungal and yeast infections of the skin.⁸ The scalp may itch as the skin exfoliates after as the infected skin sheds and healthy new skin regrows.

Troubleshooting: Why Is My Urine Green the Morning After Applying Henna?

As startling as it may be to discover that your urine is greenish, a urine color change on the morning after hennaing your hair is not actually a harmful thing. It just looks peculiar. The color

⁴ Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy. Coconut Allergy; National Health Service. United Kingdom. (January 12, 2010).

⁵ For a comparison of acids, see Chapter 6, Henna and Acidic Mixes

⁶ Truss, C. O. 1981. "The role of *Candida albicans* in human illness." *Orthomolecular Psychiatry* 10, 228 – 238

⁷ Rahiman, F. A., Mahmad, N., Taha, R. M., Elias, H., Zaman, F. H., 2013. "Antimicrobial properties of *Lawsonia inermis* syn. *Lawsonia Alba* in vivo and in vitro." *Journal of Food Agriculture and Environment* 11, 523-504,

⁸ Berenji, F., Rakhshandeh, H., Ebrahimipour, H., 2010. "In Vitro studies of the effects of henna extracts (*Lawsonia inermis*) on *Malassezia* species" *Jundishapur Journal of Microbiology* 3, 125 - 128

might range between slightly darker than usual to nearly spinach green.⁹ This is from the unabsorbed byproducts of henna being flushed out of your body through your urine. About 1% of lawsone in henna migrates from henna in hair into the blood stream. If you leave henna in your hair overnight or for a very long time, more lawsone will be available to migrate, and will have more time to migrate.

If you have hennaed your hair and otherwise feel healthy but pass green urine, you're probably fine. Eating asparagus may also cause your urine to turn green. If you have green urine from a urinary tract infection, you'll be in a great deal of pain and feel terrible, and you should consult your physician.

Troubleshooting: I Don't Have Enough Time

Henna is most effective when done with the slow, traditional processes. Women applied their henna in the hammams where women enjoyed having the whole day visiting with their friends, cleansing and beautifying themselves. Hammams had hot and cold baths and often had a steam room. A visit to the steam room would help henna stain more quickly, and give better color.

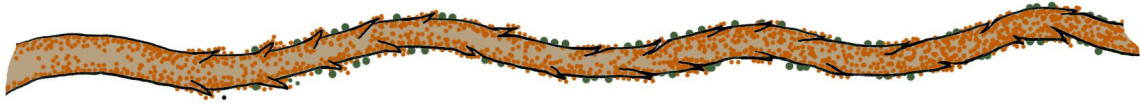
Ancient Sunrise® products and techniques are based on the centuries-old natural henna process to give you the best results. The chemicals and additives which make henna 'fast, modern, profitable, and efficient' generally give inferior results; chemical-laden convenience foods are never as delicious and satisfying as a slow, home-cooked meal. Hair dye made fast and convenient by adding chemicals causes more trouble than time saved.

You can accelerate the dyeing process slightly by adding heat, but proceed cautiously so as not to harm yourself or botch the results. In the early part of the 20th century, henna was mixed with boiling water, or stirred in a double boiler to hurry the dye release process. Some women had unnaturally orange hair from a simmered mix and others got scalded from applying hot henna paste. If you want to reduce your henna dye release time to a few hours, put on a heating pad, or under an electric blanket, to gently, evenly raise the temperature of the paste to about 105F. Check your paste every fifteen minutes or so to see if it seems to be ready. If you forget your paste in a hot place, and leave it too long, you may ruin it.

If you don't want to leave the paste on your head for several hours, you can warm yourself and your henna paste gently and reduce the dyeing time to a few hours. Cover your hair with plastic wrap so it won't dry out, and find a warm place to take a nap. Nap under an electric blanket, or with a heating pad. Do not raise the temperature of your body or head to the point that it endangers your health. You can also gradually warm the paste in your hair under a bonnet hair dryer, and hasten the dyeing process.

⁹ If your urine appears to contain blood, this is an entirely different matter, and you should contact your physician immediately; you may have an infection or you may have homozygous G6PD deficiency, an inherited genetic blood enzyme disorder. Only a physician is qualified to diagnose and treat these conditions. For more information, please read Chapter 13, Henna and your Health, Henna and G6PD Deficiency. If you know that you have homozygous Glucose-6-Phosphate Dehydrogenase Deficiency, do not use henna.

Troubleshooting: My Hair Feels Dry After Henna



A diagram of hair just after being dyed with henna, indicated by orange dots, with some plant material remaining in the hair, indicated by green dots

If your hair feels dry or ‘crunchy’ after dyeing it with henna, your hair isn’t damaged, and it will return to normal in a few days.¹⁰ As the lawsone molecules migrated into your hair, the cuticle was slightly raised by the migration and is sticking out a bit. It will settle back down if you wash it another time or two and use conditioner.

You might not have gotten all of the henna plant particles washed out of your hair. Wash it another time or two and use conditioner to help slide any remaining plant material out of your hair. This will wash away with a few shampoos. You may have some superficial lawsone left on the surface of your hair, or you may see orange running out of your hair in the shower for the first few shampoos. This is just superficial lawsone washing out of your hair, lawsone which hasn’t bonded to your keratin. As long as you have the color you want in your hair, this isn’t anything to worry about.

Troubleshooting: I have a headache

Some people get a headache after hennaing their hair. This is usually because the weight of the henna on hair is pressing down on the vertebrae in your neck, and causing a misalignment and pinching a nerve.¹¹ When you have a large amount of henna, indigo or cassia in your hair, make sure have good neck support, particularly when you rest with the paste in your hair. A doctor, masseuse, or physical therapist may be able to show you neck exercises to relieve the discomfort.

Ancient Sunrise® Henna for Hair Chapter 12 Troubleshooting

Copyright © 2015 Catherine Cartwright-Jones PhD

Cover Graphic by Alex Morgan

¹⁰ If you stroke a cat backwards and ruffle up its fur, the cat’s fur isn’t dry: it’s just all sticking out instead of lying down.

¹¹ People who perform in huge hats and wigs get similar headaches.

Published by TapDancing Lizard® LLC

339 Tallmadge Rd. Kent, Ohio, 44240

Terms of Service: Creative Commons: Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported

You are free to **Share**, to copy and redistribute this material in any medium or format under the following terms. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms **as long as you follow the license terms.**

Attribution - You must give [appropriate credit](#) and provide a link to the license. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.

Non-Commercial - You may not use this material for [commercial purposes](#).

No-Derivatives - If you [remix, transform, or build upon](#) the material, you may not distribute the modified material in any form or by any means.

For further information on henna and hair, please visit www.hennaforhair.com

To purchase henna, please visit www.mehandi.com

HELP DESK AND ORDER DESK: call 330-673-0600 or toll-free 855-MEHANDI