

PRESS RELEASE

Paris, 16 October 2024

## Warning on the risks of hair straightening products containing glyoxylic acid

As part of its cosmetovigilance mission, since the beginning of the year ANSES has received four reports of acute kidney failure following the application of so-called 'Brazilian hair straightening' treatments containing glyoxylic acid. As a precautionary measure, ANSES, the Directorate General for Competition, Consumer Affairs and Fraud Control (DGCCRF) and the Directorate General for Health (DGS) are today informing hair salon and cosmetics trade professionals, in addition to users, of this possibility of acute kidney failure associated with the application of hair straightening treatments containing glyoxylic acid. Pending the conclusions of the expert appraisal undertaken by ANSES, both the DGCCRF and the DGS advise against using such straightening products.

### **Glyoxylic acid, a potentially toxic cosmetic ingredient**

Glyoxylic acid is a chemical used in certain cosmetic products for its straightening properties. As part of the **national cosmetovigilance scheme** managed by ANSES, the four cases of acute kidney failure linked to the use of various hair straightening products containing glyoxylic acid were analysed. The poisoning victims recovered following treatment.

As soon as the first case had been analysed, ANSES issued an internal request in order to take stock of what is known about the renal toxicity of glyoxylic acid applied to the hair. The expert appraisal undertaken by the Agency aims to document a proposal for changes to European regulatory provisions in order to provide an appropriate framework for the use of this substance, currently unrestricted in cosmetic products.

Pending the conclusions of this appraisal, the DGCCRF and DGS are calling for vigilance regarding the application of hair straightening treatments containing glyoxylic acid and, given the associated risk, are even advising against their use.

## What are the signs of kidney failure and what should you do?

Symptoms of kidney failure appear a few hours after exposure to glyoxylic acid in a cosmetic product. They manifest as abdominal or lower back pain, nausea and/or vomiting.

If any of these symptoms occur, consult a doctor as soon as possible or **call a poison control centre**, specifying that you have used a hair straightening product.

As well as ensuring rapid treatment, reporting by health professionals will help to document the work of cosmetovigilance on the need to regulate the use of the substance in this type of product.

### **24-hour emergency numbers for the poison control centres**

ANGERS • +33 (0)2 41 48 21 21  
BORDEAUX • +33 (0)5 56 96 40 80  
LILLE • +33 (0)8 00 59 59 59  
LYON • +33 (0)4 72 11 69 11  
MARSEILLE • +33 (0)4 91 75 25 25  
NANCY • +33 (0)3 83 22 50 50  
PARIS • +33 (0)1 40 05 48 48  
TOULOUSE • +33 (0)5 61 77 74 47

### **Press liaison:**

#### **ANSES**

+33 (0)1 49 77 13 77 - (0)1 49 77 22 26 - (0)1 49 77 28 20  
presse@anses.fr

**Directorate General for Health, reporting to the Ministry of Health and Access to Healthcare**

+33 (0)1 87 05 93 80

Health Crisis Centre: [alerte-presse@sante.gouv.fr](mailto:alerte-presse@sante.gouv.fr)

**Directorate General for Competition, Consumer Affairs and Fraud Control**

+33 (0)1 44 97 23 91

[presse@dgccrf.finances.gouv.fr](mailto:presse@dgccrf.finances.gouv.fr)