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Possible Allergic Reactions to Organic Cosmetic Tattoo Pigments and Dyes

Walnut Creek, CA - January 30, 1994 -- Allergic reactions to tattoo colors have probably occurred throughout the past decades more often than most tattoo artists are aware of. All Micropigmentation Specialists should be on the alert with the increase in aesthetic Micropigmentation procedures, e.g., permanent cosmetics, vitiligo, scar, burn, and nipple-areola pigmentation. ALLERGIC REACTIONS TO COSMETIC ORGANIC TATTOO COLORS HAVE AND DO OCCUR.

Micropigmentation tattoo pigments and dyes can be subdivided into two categories, inorganic and organic colors. Inorganic pigments are made of relatively inert ingredients of iron oxide, glycerin and alcohol and are commonly used for permanent eyeliner, brow enhancement and camouflaging procedures. As of date, there are no documented cases of allergic reactions to inorganic iron oxide pigments.

RECENTLY, SEVERAL POSSIBLE CASES OF ORGANIC COSMETIC TATTOO PIGMENT/DYE REACTION HAVE BEEN REPORTED AND DOCUMENTED. These cases involve organic colors comprised of red D & C dyes, commonly used for lipliner and lipshading micropigmentation procedures. These red D & C dyes are FDA approved for traditional cosmetic makeup products (blushers, lipsticks, eye shadows, etc.). The FDA does not directly regulate the practice of tattooing (Micropigmentation) or approve the color additives used in the industry. A color additive is any dye, pigment or substance that can impart color when added or applied to food, drug, cosmetic, or to the human body. It should be noted that some individuals who have used blushers, lipsticks or shadows containing these dyes have experienced mild to severe allergic dermatitis. Clients who have experienced allergic reactions to these traditional makeup products are contraindicated for organic micropigmentation procedures. Caution, organic colors should NEVER be used around the eye area, as in an eyeliner or eye shadow procedure.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS OF COSMETIC PIGMENTATION PROCEDURES

An allergic hypersensitivity to organic pigments or dyes may not develop until 6 to 8 weeks later beyond the organic color sensitivity/color patch test of 30 days. In rare cases, hypersensitivity may develop 6 months to 1 year later. The micropigmented area may exhibit indurated, scaly, whitish multiple milia-like lesions or grayish-brown, verrucous lesions. Hypersensitivity reactions include pseudolymphomatus, photosensitivity, and granulomatus. The type of granuloma may be immunologic and sarcoidal. Sarcoidal tattoo reactions may be localized to the specific pigmented area, or it may have systemic characteristics.
AVAILABLE TREATMENTS

Once a client experiences an allergic reaction to an organic tattoo color, options for treatment are limited. If possible, excision of the pigment or pigment removal by laser can be performed. For an allergic response on the mucosa of the lips the course of treatment is not so conclusive. There is no sure course of action for organic pigment or dye hypersensitivity on the mucosa of lips.

CONTRAINdications

A combination of several lifestyles and physical factors may attribute to an increase risk for hypersensitivity to organic colors or contribute to procedural complications.

- Herpes simplex carrier
- Sunbathe
- Sensitivity to Red D&C dyes in traditional cosmetic make-up

Herpes simplex is a viral infection. If your client has had a herpes simplex outbreak in the past the risk of a reoccurrence after a lipliner or lipshading procedure is extremely high. The client must be pre-medicated prior to the procedure with a prophylactic (oral) antiviral medication such as famciclovir (trade name Famvir), valacyclovir (trade name Valtrex) or Acyclovir (trade name Zovirax). Your client’s physician will determine the appropriate dosage. If an outbreak occurs it will not be as severe.

Clients who sunbathe and expose their freshly micropigmented areas to ultraviolet rays contribute to herpes simplex outbreaks, since the virus is photosensitive. Also, sunbathing may increase the risk of developing a photosensitivity to Red D&C dyes. These colors may result in a sensitivity reaction in the lips if exposed to ultraviolet rays from natural sunlight or tanning booths. The client should be instructed postoperatively to apply a SPF 30 sun block.

RECOMMENDED SENSITIVITY/COLOR PATCH TESTING---GUIDELINES

Take heed: A SENSITIVITY/COLOR PATCH TEST SHOULD BE PERFORMED ON EVERY CLIENT.

The LeMor Micropigmentation Institute strongly advocates performing a thorough well-documented skin test procedure prior to any lip color procedure.

Patch testing serves a dual purpose. First, patch testing may indicate a possible allergic response to the pigment/dye color. Secondly, patch testing serves as color test assuring the client and Specialist that the right pigment color was chosen.

Performing a sensitivity test prior to any Micropigmentation procedure using organic dyes is advisable. Check with your liability insurance carrier for additional guidelines. A medical history will help determine possible pigment/dye allergic reactions. Sensitivities to eye shadows, lipsticks, and blush containing red and orange D&C dyes may indicate a potential allergic response to the red/orange organic dye colors. A separate patch test should be performed for EACH color because the ingredients differ for each organic dye. The test site should be evaluated in 30 Days. Remember, organic lip colors may contain red dyes and could possibly cause a severe allergic reaction; they MUST NOT be used around the eye area.
Recommended Sensitivity/Color Patch Test Procedure:

Using a new triple prong needle, perform a patch test in the area of the procedure site by depositing a series of dots of color. Any adverse reaction is likely to appear as intense itching of the skin without eruption (pruritic) associated with abnormal redness of the skin with nodule like characteristics (erythema nodosum).

Even though the reaction normally occurs immediately or over a period of 24 hours, it is advised to wait 2-7 days for the inorganic pigments and 30 days for the organic dyes.

CONSENT FORM

Document each test and make certain the client signs a general liability consent form waiving you from all liability if an allergic reaction does occur.

*It is critical that every micropigmentation specialist strictly adheres to the following guidelines when testing for possible allergic reactions to tattoo colors for the client's safety.*

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About LeMor MPI:

Yolanda Moore, MPS founded the LeMor Micropigmentation Institute in 1989. Yolanda is a recognized expert/authority in the micropigmentation field both domestically and internationally. Her articles have appeared in beauty magazines such as *Self Magazine*, and *Skin Inc*. Yolanda has also appeared on the “*Good Evening Magazine*” television show.

Yolanda has trained thousands in the art and science of permanent cosmetics and her 13 years of experience translate into over 10,000 hands-on permanent cosmetic procedures.

Yolanda’s background and education is unique to the field of Micropigmentation. She holds multiple degrees in biology and chemistry as well as a Master’s degree from the University of California, Berkeley.

Yolanda is a proud member of the Society of Permanent Cosmetic Professionals, the International Micropigmentation Association and the American Academy of Micropigmentation.

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