

# Women's Voices for the Earth



## The Blow-Up on Blowouts Brazilian Blowout & Other Hair Straightening Products

### What is a Professional Hair Straightener?

A professional hair straightener is a salon product designed to straighten curly or frizzy hair for a period up to three months and is applied by a stylist with the use of a flat iron. They are not meant for consumer use at home. Popular brands include Brazilian Blowout. They are also known as keratin hair smoothing products.

### What's Wrong With Them?

Brazilian Blowout and several other leading brands of hair straightening products have been found to contain high levels of formaldehyde (also referred to as methylene glycol), even when labeled "formaldehyde-free." Formaldehyde is released during the heating process used in the application of the product. Formaldehyde gas is a dangerous pollutant that can be severely irritating to the eyes, nose and throat, and long term exposure to formaldehyde in the workplace has been associated with an increased risk of cancer. In April 2011, the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issued a hazard alert against the use of hair straighteners containing formaldehyde. Additionally, the Cosmetics Ingredient Review, an industry-funded panel of scientists tasked with reviewing the safety of cosmetic products, declared that they could not conclude that formaldehyde exposure from these types of products is safe.



### Have People Been Harmed by These Products?

Yes. In 2010, stylists in Oregon and California were among the first to report problems they had with Brazilian Blowout, including difficulty breathing, nose bleeds, and eye irritation, to state regulatory authorities. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has also received numerous complaints from customers and salon workers about similar symptoms as well as rashes, fainting and hair loss associated with use of the product. No health studies have yet been conducted to assess the degree to which these products may be increasing cancer risk in stylists or customers.

### What is Being Done About These Toxic Products?

In the United States, these products are still available for use in salons. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is examining the data on these products and reviewing complaints from hairstylists who have used them, but has not yet recommended a recall. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issued a hazard alert for salon employees warning against the use of hair straighteners containing formaldehyde. The California Attorney General has filed an injunction against the company that manufactures Brazilian Blowout for failing to warn their customers that their product contained cancer-causing formaldehyde. Other countries, most notably, Canada,

France, Ireland and Australia immediately recalled hair smoothing products containing formaldehyde, based on their own testing results.

### Do all Hair Straightening Products Contain Formaldehyde?

It is unclear how many brands of hair straightening products contain formaldehyde because current federal regulations do not require manufacturers of salon products to disclose their ingredients. Under current law, it is legal for salon products to contain chemicals linked to cancer, like formaldehyde. Brands like Brazilian Blowout have claimed to be formaldehyde-free, but independent laboratory tests have revealed otherwise.

### How Do I Know Which Brand to Use?

Products tested by Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration and/or Health Canada found to contain varying levels of formaldehyde	
Brazilian Blowout Smoothing Solution	Global Keratin Taming System Strawberry
Brazilian Blowout Acai Professional	Global Keratin Taming System with Juvexin Strawberry Resistant
Smoothing Solution "Formaldehyde Free"	Pro-Collagen RX Keratin Treatment
Keratin Connection Brazilian Keratin Treatment (Mint, Chocolate and Strawberry)	IStraight Keratin (Advanced Keratin Treatment), IBS Beauty
Keratin Express Brazilian Smoother	Cadiveu Brazilian Thermal Reconstruction
Coppola Keratin Complex Smoothing Therapy	Keratin Connection Brazilian Keratin Treatment (Mint, Chocolate and Strawberry)
Coppola Keratin Complex Express Blowout	Inoar Moroccan Hair Treatment
Marcia Teixeira Brazilian Keratin Treatment	Global Keratin Taming System Strawberry
Marcia Teixeira Advanced Brazilian Keratin Treatment	Global Keratin Taming System with Juvexin Strawberry Resistant
Marcia Teixeira Chocolate extreme de-frizzing treatment	Global Keratin Taming System with Juvexin Strawberry Light Wave
QOD Gold solution	La Brasiliana Veloce
Kera Green Keratin	La Brasiliana Zero (Apple, Clear and Mocha)
Inoar Moroccan Hair Treatment	Brazilian Gloss Keratin Smoothing Gloss
Formaldehyde was not detected in these hair smoothing products	
Pravana Naturceuticals Keratin Fusion	JKs Smoothing Treatment
Bio Ionic Kera Smooth anti frizz	

### What Can You Do?

**Love your curls!** Skip the hair-straightening treatment until the federal government regulates these products and can confirm they are formaldehyde-free and safe to use.

**Go old school.** Hair smoothing with a flat iron is a little more work, and will not last as long, but it can give you the same straightening results without the risk of dangerous chemical exposure.

**Demand change!** Sign the letter to the FDA, asking them to recall hair straightening products that contain formaldehyde: <http://bit.ly/hOcTkA>

**Learn More.** Visit: [www.womensvoices.org/brazilian-blowout/](http://www.womensvoices.org/brazilian-blowout/) which includes links to more information, the latest updates on the Brazilian Blowout controversy, and valuable information for stylists who need to know more.