

OLAPLEX

Our colorist is like a really hot ex. After every encounter, we come away a little more damaged—but we can't help going back for more. Now, a new additive called Olaplex makes this relationship significantly healthier. Scientists found a new set of molecules that creates a buffer between your hair and the chemicals that harm it during the permanent-coloring process. So now your colorist really is just a friend with benefits.

HOW IT WORKS: This is going to get complicated, but bear with us. When peroxide enters the hair shaft to lighten your natural pigments and make room for the color you actually want, it also splits the disulfide bonds that make hair strong and resilient. These once-happy pairs turn into single sulfur-hydrogen bonds. Still with us? If one oxygen molecule created by the peroxide reaction links up with one of these singletons, great. No harm done. But about 50 percent of the time...cue the *Jaws* theme. Oxygen molecules also move in packs of three, and when these little predators attach to the vulnerable sulfur-hydrogen bonds, they trigger a reaction that eats protein out of the hair, leaving it dry and frayed. Amazingly, Olaplex eliminates that reaction. In the small bottles of liquid your colorist adds to two steps of your regular dyeing process is one extraordinary ingredient—a chain of carbon, oxygen, nitrogen, and sulfur with two reactive ends that love sulfur-hydrogen bonds. When you mix it into hair color, it couples with them faster than oxygen can, creating a new bond that is actually stronger than the original disulfide ones. So hair health is maintained, and the oxygen simply dissipates because it can't find anyone to play with.

WHAT AN EXPERT SAYS: "This product is the chemical equivalent of someone pushing you out of the way and stepping in front of the bus," says Wilson. "It means colorists can take people several shades lighter with less risk of breakage." Colorist Tracey Cunningham of the *Mèche* salon in Los Angeles adds, "I've been blown away by Olaplex. Not only does it prevent breakage but my clients tell me their hair feels silkier and fuller, too. Plus, it makes my life a hell of a lot less stressful knowing I'm not going to damage hair when I color it!"

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