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How Does Airbrush Tanning Work?

When skin is exposed to UV rays, either by natural sunlight or by tanning beds, the skin becomes tanned. Unfortunately, the UV rays also cause damage to the skin that can eventually result in skin cancer. A safer approach is through sun-free tanning methods, such as airbrush tanning. Now, there is a better way to get a tan, a way that won't damage the skin: Airbrush tanning.

Airbrush tanning does not utilize UV rays to tan the skin. The active ingredient in most airbrush tanning solutions is dihydroxyyacetone, or DHA. This substance has been proven to be gentle and safe to use directly on the skin. The airbrush tanning process, then, is a safe, effective and sun-free way of tanning the skin.

The process

During the airbrush tanning procedures, an instrument the size of an average pen sprays the tanning solution onto the skin. When the DHA solution comes in contact with the skin, the body's chemistry causes a reaction between the amino acids in the skin and the DHA. This reaction causes the body to produce melanin, which darkens the skin. This darkening of the skin as a result of the melanin reaction is same reaction that is caused by sun tanning; the differences is it is the DHA that is causing the reaction in a safe way, not the harmful way that can be caused by UV rays.

The benefit of the airbrush method of tanning is that the spray stream can reach areas of the body that other methods, such as self-tanning lotions, simply can't. Difficult areas to reach can be the elbows, the feet, and the hairline.

Once the airbrush tan has a chance to set or "cure," it will not wash off with regular bathing or washing with soap and water. Like a natural tan, an airbrush tan will gradually fade over time as the upper levels of the skin (the epidermis) shed and slough away. To re-darken the tan, simply apply another coat. Depending on the skin tone and type, it may take several applications to achieve the desired tan color. It is possible to remove the tan before it fades by gently scrubbing the tanned surface with a soft wash cloth. This will remove the top layers of skin and will lessen the look of the tan.

Caring for your skin after your tan

The fact of the matter is this: No matter what method you use to tan your skin, you're going ot have to give your skin a little TLC afterwards in order to keep your skin feeling its best. In the case of an airbrush tan, proper skin care is also required to keep the tan looking its best and lasting as long as popular.

During the first few nights following your airbrush tanning treatment, it is a good idea to apply a tan extender. This will help to prolong the look of your tan while protecting your skin. Also, it is important to keep the skin protected from the sun. The tanned surface of the skin is still vulnerable to the damaging rays of the sun. Use sunscreen with a high SPF rating before going out into the sun.

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