

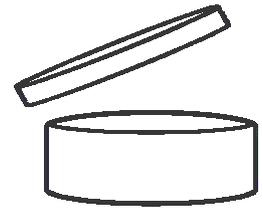
QUESTIONS/ANSWERS ON THE “PERIOD OF TIME AFTER OPENING”¹

What is the “PERIOD OF TIME AFTER OPENING”?

The period of time after opening informs consumers of the authorised period of time a product may be used after opening without any harm to the consumer. This new labelling requirement follows from the Directive adopted in February 2003 by the European Parliament and the Council amending the legislation on cosmetic products².

How is the “period of time after opening” indicated?

The period of time after opening is indicated by a symbol representing an open cream jar and the period given in months and/or years. This symbol was adopted by the European Commission in collaboration with Member States and the cosmetics industry³. If the period is given in months, it may be indicated by a number followed by the word “month(s)” or by the abbreviation “M”, the letter “M” corresponding to *mensis*, or month in Latin.



When does this labelling requirement come into force?

The labelling requirement covers cosmetic products placed on the European market from 11 March 2005 onwards. For a transitional period, labelled and unlabelled products will therefore be available on the market until stocks of the “old” products have sold out.

Is the “period of time after opening” indicated on all cosmetic products?

The “period of time after opening” must be indicated on products with a shelf life of 30 months or more. For products with a shelf life of 30 months or less the minimum shelf life must be stated; i.e. the date up until which the product, kept under the right conditions, can continue to fulfil its initial function without any harm to human health.

The new labelling will not cover:

- products not at risk of deterioration;
- products which do not open (such as products in sealed packaging, or sprays)
- or products which are intended to be used only once.

¹ Based on the document adopted on 19 April 2004 by the Cosmetic Products Working Party 04/ENTR/COS/28 revised, entitled “Practical Implementation of Article 6(1)(c) of the Cosmetics Directive (76/768/EEC): labelling of product durability: period of time after opening”.

² Directive 2003/15/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 February 2003 amending Council Directive 76/768/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to cosmetic products, OJ L 66 of 11 March 2003, p. 26.

³ Commission Directive 2003/80/EC of 5 September 2003 establishing a symbol indicating the durability of cosmetic products in Annex VIIIa to Council Directive 76/768/EEC, OJ L 224 of 6 September 2003, p. 27.