

Industry reduces hair complaints by at least 33%

Hair in food is a key consumer issue monitored by retail multiples and costs industry an average of £40 per complaint. Hair complaints are caused by both natural and man-made practices.

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According to Professor Barry Stevens, FTTS, President of the Trichological Society 2014-16, hair contamination is caused by:

- Natural shedding. The average human sheds 40-130 hairs every day naturally at a constant rate.
- Modern styling practices such as higher temperature settings on hair driers, colouring, bleaching, relaxing and waving by heat or chemical processes. These practices cause the hair to blister and frequently break along the hair shaft leaving a shorter length of loose hair.

Hair shedding occurs at a constant rate throughout the day and night and when combined with the shorter lengths of severed hairs creates a multitude of loose hair. These hairs may then contaminate food by either:

- Passing through standard fabrics when abrasion occurs against the head of hair, such as fidgeting/scratching the head or adjusting head coverings.
- Dislodged from the elasticated edge when adjusting or fidgeting.
- Free fall from badly fitted head coverings with exposed hair.

Reducing hair complaints therefore requires both effective hair

containment and effective training and monitoring.

Aburnet have designed head coverings to prevent hair passing through hair barrier fabrics and to keep workers cool and comfortable to reduce the incidence of fidgeting and adjustment.

Effective training and monitoring of best practice can be achieved by using Aburnet's free training guidance, best practice posters and free on line auditing tools with instant graphical reporting.

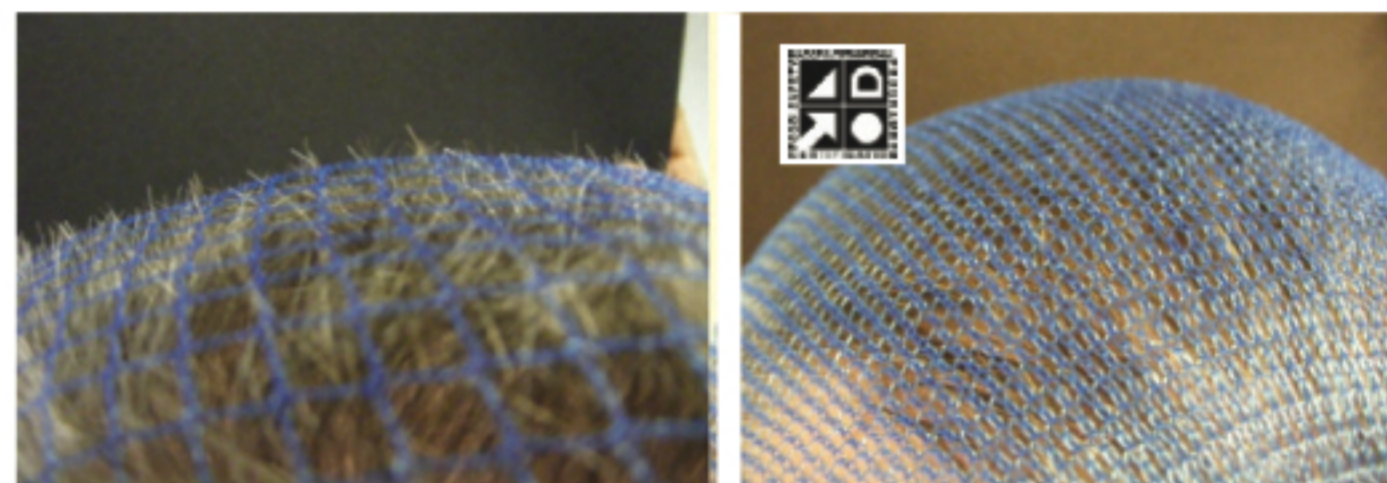
Industry evaluation

HACCP International, the product certification body, recently evaluated a selection of hair coverings, from both products widely used in industry and those new to the market. Their results reveal some startling conclusions.

The mob cap, widely used in industry, failed the HACCP International evaluation as a method of hair containment.

The results of their findings are interesting because they sit beside research undertaken by the University of Bolton, UK and endorsements from Professor Barry Stevens and the experience of industry.

According to Professor Subhash Anand MBE, Professor of Technical Textiles, Institute for Materials Research and Innovation, University of Bolton, UK, "Nonwoven materials such as those used in mob and bouffant caps should not be used as a hair barrier fabric. Due to the non-woven manufacturing methods of spinning the fibres, it is impossible



Left, a traditional diamond-shaped mesh hairnet (5mm example pictured), which is not certified by HACCP International. Right, HairTite Hi-Care, which is certified by HACCP International.

to control the alignment and spacing of the fibres leading to variable fabric structure with inherent gaps and different densities, allowing hairs to protrude through. Due to the fabric's rigidity, it will neither hold the head of hair nor grip strands of hair that protrude through the fabric. It is a totally unsuitable material."

Industry has proven that new HACCP International certified hair containment products – Aburnet's HairTite HygieNets and KleenCaps with HairBarrier technology – are effective at reducing hair complaints by 33% and more. Using these products helped one UK company to achieve a coveted Gold award from a key retail customer.

HairTite's patented technology lightly folds and holds 2 x more hair than traditional diamond shaped mesh hair nets for the same cost.

KleenCap patent pending technologies include the following:

- HairBarrier – light recoil, positive attraction and anti-slip fabrics.
- StayCool – moisture is wicked

away leaving the worker cool and comfortable when compared to non-woven mob caps.

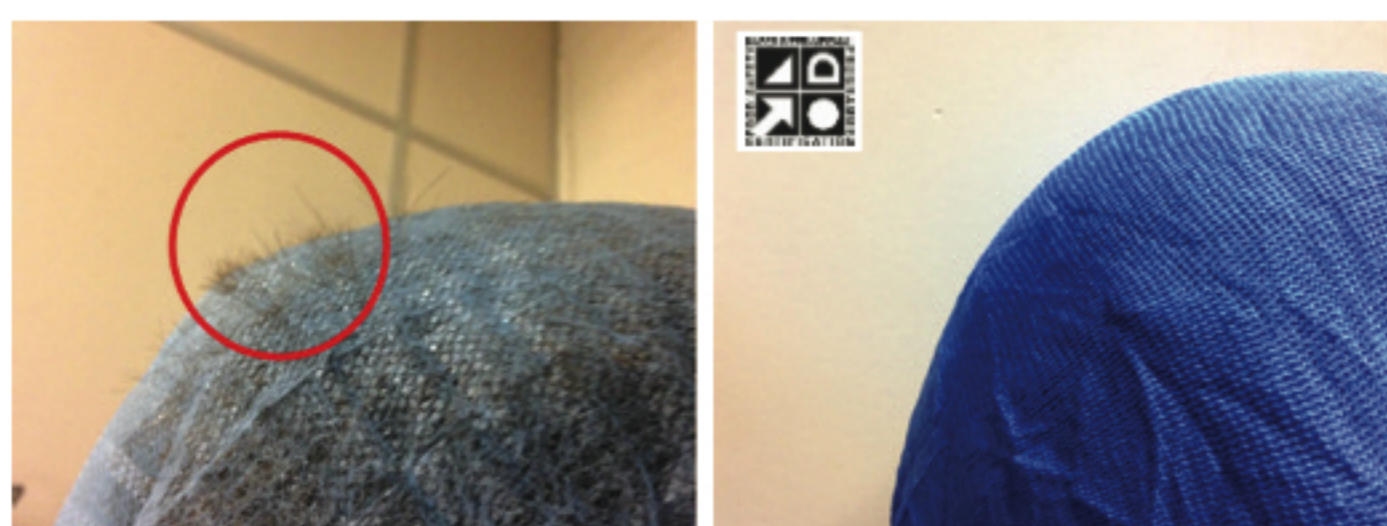
- Anti-microbial treatments, independently tested, applied to the whole product, are effective at prohibiting the multiplication of both Gram positive and Gram negative bacteria and fungi reducing the possibility of the food handler being a cross vector of pathogens known to cause food poisoning.

Effective training

Free on-line tools, including visual guidance posters in best practice and wearing, supported by on-line auditing with instant graphical reporting, allow companies to effectively pin-point areas for improvement and track performance quickly and easily.

By following these methods, industry has significantly reduced hair complaints improving food quality and safety resulting in an improved customer relationship. ■

Left, a 12gsm mob cap which is not certified by HACCP International and right, KleenCap, which is certified.



500 x magnification of human hair against a mob cap, left, and KleenCap, right. The image demonstrates the variable spacing and non-alignment of the spun fibres – present in all weights of nonwoven fabrics such as those used in mob caps, bouffant caps and beard cover.

