

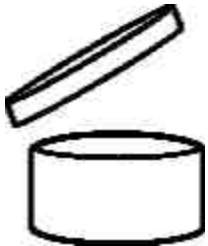
Period After Opening

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Introduction

The **PAO (period after opening) symbol** identifies the useful lifetime of a personal care product after its package has been opened for the first time. The symbol represents an open cream jar and is used together with a written number of months.¹

In the European Union, products with a shelf-life of less than 30 months are required to carry a "best used before end of..." date. The "period of time after opening" must be indicated on products with shelf life of 30 months or more.² The EU Cosmetics Directive defines in Annex VIIIa the language-neutral open-jar symbol, which manufacturers should use to indicate this period.³



The time period is most often represented compactly as a number of months, followed by the letter "M", as in "36M" for a period of thirty-six months, written either onto the front side of the depicted cream jar, or to the right of it.

Practical Implementation of the Cosmetics Directive

The Cosmetics Directive states :

¹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:1976L0768:20080424:en:PDF>

² http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/sectors/cosmetics/files/pdf/periodafteropeninglabel_qa_2005_2_en.pdf

³ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:1976L0768:20080424:en:PDF>

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A variety of **relevant methods** may be used to support the period indicated on a product, including those used during product development, since there is no officially sanctioned methodology that could be used.

Examples of sources of information for assessing a product's PAO include:

- microbiological challenge tests
- stability data
- analytical data (e.g. preservative analysis)
- type of packaging
- experience with similar formulations and products
- consumer habits and practices.⁴

Products that have *not* had Prior Stability Testing

The **PAO** (x many months) can be determined by performing a stability study on an opened unit. The testing consists of sample incubation in a controlled environment, with physical, microbial and analytical testing done at specified intervals.

Products which have *already* had Prior Stability Testing

If all other relevant testing on the sample has been performed, the **PAO** can be determined by performing a stability study on an opened unit. The testing consists of sample incubation in a controlled environment, with microbial safety substantiated by testing the antimicrobial effectiveness of the preservative system (one time formula test).

Additional Information

For more information or a specific price quotation, contact BioScreen Client Services by telephone at 310-214-0043, or by email at info@bioscreen.com

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/sectors/cosmetics/files/doc/wd-04-entr-cos_28_rev_version_adoptee20040419_en.pdf

