# Does gold-plated jewellery tarnish over time?

Gold Jewelry & Accessories · https://www.purejewels.com/faqs/gold-jewelry-accessories/does-gold-plated-jewellery-tarnish-over-time/

Yes, gold plated jewellery can and does tarnish over time. A thin layer of gold sits over a base metal such as brass or copper, and once that layer wears through which it will with daily contact, sweat and friction the base metal underneath oxidises and discolours.

**PureJewels does not sell gold-plated jewellery.** Every piece in our collection is solid 22ct or 18ct hallmarked gold, so the plating tarnish described on this page isn't something our customers deal with.

## Why does gold plating tarnish?

Plating is a surface, not a solid. The gold layer on plated jewellery is measured in microns, often thinner than a sheet of paper. Everyday wear rubs it thin, and sweat, perfume, hand creams and cleaning chemicals all speed it up; friction at edges and clasps wears it fastest. Once the base metal is exposed, it reacts with air and moisture, and the piece dulls, darkens, or leaves a green mark on the skin.

## How long does plating last compared to solid gold?

It depends on which kind of "gold" you're comparing. Here is how the common options stack up:

| | **Gold plated** | **Gold filled** | **Gold vermeil** | **Soli** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gold content | Very thin (0.5–2.5 microns) | Bonded layer (~5% of weight) | Thicker layer (2.5+ microns, on silver) | 91.6 |
| Typical daily-wear life | 6 months–2 years | 5–10 years | 2–5 years | A lif |
| Holds its value | No | No | No | Yes |

| | Gold plated | Gold filled | Gold vermeil | Soli |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Safe for sensitive skin | Depends on base metal | Usually | Usually (silver base) | Yes hypo |
| Can be re-plated | Yes (at a cost) | No | Yes (at a cost) | Not |

## When does it make sense to buy plated?

Plated jewellery has its place. It makes sense for fashion pieces you'll wear for a season, for very large statement pieces where solid gold would be too heavy or too costly, or where the look matters more than how long it lasts. But for daily wear, sentimental pieces, cultural jewellery, or anything you plan to keep for years, solid gold is worth the difference in price.

If you want jewellery that lasts without tarnishing, browse our 22ct hallmarked gold collection. Every piece is solid gold throughout, listed with its exact gram weight, and independently certified by the London Assay Office. For gold held purely for its value, our gold bars and coins are solid 24ct.

**By Jayant Raniga, PureJewels Green Street**

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