Prevent Blindness
Our Vision Is Vision.

Safe Use of Eye Cosmetics



Eye cosmetics are made to enhance your appearance. Improper use of eye cosmetics can lead to serious eye infections, irritations, corneal injuries, damage to contact lenses and allergies.

- Most new eye cosmetics bought from well-known national brand companies are free from bacteria that can cause eye infections.
- Most contain preservatives that prevent the growth of bacteria.
- Misused and improperly preserved eye makeup can cause eye infections.
- Bacteria can grow fast in a product and get into the eye. If the brush scratches the cornea, bacteria on the brush can enter the scratch.

Tips for using eye cosmetics safely

- Wash your hands before applying makeup. Some bacteria can transfer from your hands to your eyes.
- Disposable applicators are the best to use, but keep all applicators clean and in good condition. Do not reuse old applicators.
- Cosmetics should be kept away from extreme heat and cold that can break down the preservatives, allowing bacteria to grow. Do not carry mascara in your purse or leave makeup in your car.
- Avoid “natural” and “preservative-free” products. Bacteria may thrive in these products.
- Moisture promotes the growth of bacteria so do not moisten cosmetics with water or saliva.
- Do not share your makeup with others or use someone else’s makeup.
- Do not switch mascara brushes from one vial to another.
- Never apply makeup while driving or riding in a moving vehicle.
- To reduce the chance of allergic reaction, use cosmetics labeled “fragrance-free,” “hypo-allergenic” or “for sensitive skin.”
- Always remove makeup every night. Never sleep with eye makeup on.
- Never separate lashes with a pin, toothpick or other pointed object.

For more information, visit us on the web at: PreventBlindness.org

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Safe Use of Eye Cosmetics— *(continued)*



Special Information for Contact Lens Wearers

Contact lens wearers must take extra care when applying and removing eye cosmetics. Improperly used cosmetics can lead to lens deposits, scratches, eye irritations, allergies, dryness, injuries and infections.

Cosmetic or zero-power contacts come with the same risks as regular contacts. Never buy cosmetic contacts without a prescription! Never share your cosmetic contacts with others or use someone else's contacts.

- Use aerosol products such as hair spray or deodorant before you insert your lenses.
- Insert lenses before applying makeup and remove them before taking makeup off.
- Oily eye makeup remover can cause a cloudy buildup on lenses.
- Use water-soluble cosmetics or those that are labeled safe for use with contact lenses.
- Use pressed powder eye shadows. Frosted and glittery eye shadows contain particles that can be harmful if they get into your eye.
- Use an eye shadow base. It can help shadow stay in place and out of your eyes.
- Avoid dislodging your contacts by applying makeup with a light touch.
- Do not apply skin creams, moisturizers or other products too closely to the eyes.
- Avoid waterproof mascara and eye makeup containing nylon or rayon fibers. These can flake off, get caught under the contact lens and scratch the cornea.
- Use pressed face powder instead of loose powder. Remove excess powder from your eyelids and eyelashes.
- Eyeliner applied to the inner eyelid can clog tiny oil glands, which can lead to an irritation.

What to do if you experience a problem

- Report persistent, severe pain to an eye doctor right away.
- If a mild irritation persists or worsens after you've stopped using the makeup, see an eye doctor right away.
- Do not apply makeup to broken or irritated skin. If you develop an eye infection, discard the makeup right away and stop using all eye makeup until the infection is gone.