

Kohl Can Poison Children

“My daughter was poisoned by kohl. We couldn’t even tell she was sick. A doctor tested her blood for lead. I thought kohl was healthy because it is natural. Now I know it has lead, which hurts children.” - Refugee Mother

Lead is a Poison

- Most kohl that is from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East has lead. People have used kohl for a long time. Now we know it is dangerous.
- Many children across the United States have tested high for lead from using kohl. Kohl is also called “ranja,” “surma,” “kajal,” “gajal,” “kahal,” or “al-kahal.”
- Lead can poison the brain and make it hard for children to **learn, pay attention, and behave.**

Child with kohl around eyes



Lead can get into the eyes and mouth and poison children

Do Not Use

Do not use kohl products like these. They may have high amounts of lead in them.



Use Safer Products

Use products from the USA or Europe such as “Kajal” by Maybelline and “Infallible” by L’Oréal.



Get a lead test

- Ask your doctor for a lead test for your child.
- Getting a lead test is the only way to know if someone has lead poisoning.

For more information



**Region 1: New England
Pediatric Environmental Health
Specialty Unit (PEHSU)**

617-355-8177
www.childrenshospital.org/pehc



This fact sheet was supported by the American College of Medical Toxicology (ACMT) and funded (in part) by the cooperative agreement FAIN: 5U61TS000238-05 from the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR).

Acknowledgement: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) supports the PEHSU by providing partial funding to ATSDR under Inter-Agency Agreement number DW-75-9587701. Neither EPA nor ATSDR endorse the purchase of any commercial products or services mentioned in PEHSU publications.