

# Surma Can Poison Children

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

Baby with surma around eyes



Source: Rolf Klemm, Johns Hopkins University

## Lead is a Poison

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

Lead can get into the eyes and mouth and poison children

## Do Not Use

Do not use surma 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](http://www.childrenshospital.org/pehc)



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