



Kajal, eyeliner and lipstick may glam up your face instantly. But constant use can be harmful too

by Parul Khanna

ASK A woman what her party essentials are, or which products are most likely to be found in her handbag in case she needs some instant glam, and this is what you will get: kajal, eyeliner and lipstick. They are easy to use and can turn a woman from frump to film star with just a touch. But as with everything, overusing them the way we tend to can have severe consequences.

CHEMICAL CALAMITY

Ask any doctor about makeup, and you'll be told that no cosmetic is ever good for the skin, eyes or lips. That's because cosmetics usually contain chemicals. And these, applied directly on the skin, will sooner or later cause allergic reactions. So, says Dr Munish Paul, consultant dermatologist, Max Healthcare, "Use makeup judiciously."

Over time, makeup can lead to allergic contact dermatitis, beginning with a rash and continuing to cracked lips or red, scratchy, watering eyes. "It's best to stop using the products when the symptoms occur," says Dr Paul.

Recently, it was a combination of pollen and her eye makeup that made actress Bipasha Basu go near blind - temporarily.

UNDER THE SKIN

Here are the possible side effects of the three most popular cosmetics.

Kajal: The homemade version is

often said to be good for the eyes. But doctors say regular use could cause a contact allergic reaction that could lead to inflammation, redness and itching in the eyes.

Kajal can also block the tear glands, says Dr Charulata Bose, consultant dermatologist, Artemis Health Institute, Gurgaon, which can cause recurring sties and painful ulcers. "Most important, though," she says, "do not go to sleep until you've removed every speck of kajal from your eyes. Aside from a possible allergy, kajal tends to spread and in the long run, it could darken your under-eye area."

Eyeliner: It can make the eyes look gorgeous, but be careful. Dr DM Mahajan, senior consultant dermatologist, Apollo Hospitals, says that most eyeliners are covered with a compound that is photo and light sensitive. "Some women might experience photodermatitis, an allergic reaction when some compounds present in the eyeliner react to the sunlight," he says. "This causes irritation and inflammation of the eyes."

Lipstick: It's one of the oldest cosmetics ever, but excessive use of lipstick, especially dark shades, can darken the lips, say doctors. "It's true that dark lipsticks darken the natural colour of your lips. But lighter shades are safe," says Dr Bose. Dr Mahajan explains that eosin, a chemical dye in most lipsticks, causes the lips to lose their natural shade. Lipstick dermatitis is another problem women might face, says Dr Paul. "It might cause the lips to swell and also cause irritation."

The best way to avoid these potential problems is to use hypoallergenic cosmetics or products that have a decreased tendency to provoke an allergic reaction, says Dr Mahajan.



WATCH IT

- Keep lipsticks, eyeliners and kajal covered
- Don't keep cosmetics for longer than 18 months
- Never use anyone else's kajal pencil, lipstick or eyeliner. It's unhygienic
- Don't put makeup on a rash or allergy

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