

# Cosmetics

People use cosmetics to enhance their beauty. These products range from lipstick and foundation to deodorant, toothpaste and hairspray.

In 1938, Congress passed the U.S. Food, Drug, and Cosmetics Act. In the 70 years since the law was passed, the Federal government has worked with industry to keep cosmetics safe. Together we have made many changes to protect consumers. Here are some important things to know.

## How does the law protect you? Cosmetics:

- Must be made and packaged in clean factories.
- Cannot contain poison, rotten, or harmful ingredients.
- May only use color additives that are FDA-approved.
- Must have a clear, truthful label.

## Read the label!

The law says a label must include:

- What the product is.
- A list of what is in the product and how to use it safely.
- How much of the product the package contains by weight.
- The name of the company that makes or sells the product.

## Does FDA test cosmetics before they are sold?

FDA does not test cosmetics before they are sold in stores. Companies must make sure their products and ingredients are safe before they sell them. FDA can take action against companies who break the law.

## Safety tips for beauty

- Follow all directions on the label, including “Cautions” and “Warnings.”
- Keep makeup containers clean and closed tight when not in use.
- Wash your hands before you put on makeup.
- Do not share makeup.
- Do not add saliva or water to makeup.
- Throw away makeup if the color or smell changes.
- Don't store your make-up above 85 degrees Fahrenheit/29 degrees Celsius
- Stop using a product if you get a rash or have a problem.
- Do not use spray cans while you are smoking or near an open flame. It could start a fire.
- Do not put on makeup while you are driving.



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## Special Tips for Your Eyes

- Do not keep mascara too long. Some companies say three months is long enough.
- Do not use eye makeup if you have an eye infection. Throw away eye makeup you were using.
- Do not use cosmetics near your eyes unless they are meant for your eyes. For example, don't use a lip liner as an eyeliner. You may spread germs from your mouth to your eyes.

## Will my cosmetics expire?

- There is no law that cosmetics must have an expiration date.
- Expiration dates are just guidelines. A product may go bad sooner if you store it the wrong way.

## Are “testers” at makeup counters safe?

- Testers can have lots of germs because so many people use them.
- When you test a product at the counter, use a new sponge or cotton swab.

## Could I be allergic to something in a cosmetic?

- Some people may react to something in a product. For example, they may have itching, redness, rash, sneezing, or wheezing.
- Allergies may happen the first time you use a product or after you have used it more than once.

## What should I do if I have a bad reaction to a cosmetic?

- Stop using the product.
- Call your doctor to find out how to take care of the problem.
- Call FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN) at (301) 436-2405 or
- Send an email to [CAERS@cfsan.fda.gov](mailto:CAERS@cfsan.fda.gov).
- Call the company that makes the product.

**FDA Office of Women's Health** <http://www.fda.gov/womens>

## To Learn More:

### FDA Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition

Phone: 1-888-723-3366

<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov>