



## Religious Powder Sindoor Found to Contain Lead

### What is sindoor?

Sindoor, also known as vermilion, is a traditional powder used for religious purposes in Hinduism and as a symbol of marriage for Hindu women. The orange or red pigment is used on both children and adults and is intended for topical use only. Sindoor should never be used in food.

### Which types of sindoor contain lead?

There are many varieties and manufacturers of sindoor and not all products labeled sindoor contain lead. Lead may be added if red pigment containing lead is used in the powder. A product may contain high levels of lead even if lead is not listed as an ingredient on the label. It is difficult for users of these products to tell the difference between safe and dangerous brands.

### How does lead from sindoor get into the body?

When a person uses these products, some of the sindoor can get onto the hands. Lead can enter the body if the user puts their hands in their mouth. There have also been lead poisoning cases where people used sindoor as a food coloring.

### Why is lead dangerous?

Lead is a poisonous metal that can damage the brain, nervous system, reproductive system, kidneys and other parts of the body. Children and pregnant women who use products containing lead are especially at risk.

### What should I do if I use sindoor?

- **Always** wash hands after handling.
- Never use sindoor in or with food.
- Keep products away from children.
- Ask your doctor for a blood lead test. If you do not have a doctor, call 311 for help.

### Additional Resources:

- [FDA Alert](#)
- [CDC Alert](#)
- [Pediatric Lead Exposure From Imported Indian Spices and Cultural Powders](#)