



Imported Eye Cosmetics Found to Contain Lead: Kohl, Kajal, Surma and Tiro

What are *kohl*, *kajal*, *surma* and *tiro*?

These are eye cosmetics imported from Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Some cultures believe that these products have medicinal purposes and apply them as part of their tradition. Kohl, kajal, surma and tiro have been found to contain high levels of lead.

How does lead affect my health?

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

How does lead from kohl, kajal, surma or tiro get into the body?

When a person uses these products, some of the kohl, kajal, surma or tiro can get onto the hands. The user may then ingest the lead through hand-to-mouth contact. Some lead may also be absorbed through the eyes.

Which types of kohl, kajal, surma or tiro contain lead?

There are many varieties and manufacturers of kohl, kajal, surma and tiro. Any of them can contain lead. Some of the products found to contain lead are listed in nyc.gov/hazardousproducts.

How can I know if my kohl, kajal, surma or tiro contains lead?

It is difficult for users of these products to tell the difference between safe and dangerous brands. A product may contain high levels of lead even if lead is not listed as an ingredient on the label.

What should I do if I have used kohl, kajal, surma or tiro?

- **Immediately** stop using these products.
- Ask your doctor for a blood lead test. If you do not have a doctor, call 311 for help.
- Keep these products away from children.
- **Call 311 or 212 POISONS (212-764-7667)** for more information about lead in kohl, kajal, surma and tiro. Translation services are available.

Additional Resources

- **FDA Alerts (www.fda.gov):**
 - [Eye Cosmetic Safety](#)
 - [Kohl, Kajal, Al-Kahal, or Surma: By Any Name, Beware of Lead Poisoning](#)
- **CDC MMWR (<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr>):**
 - [Childhood Lead Exposure Associated with the Use of Kajal, an Eye Cosmetic from Afghanistan — Albuquerque](#)
 - [Infant Lead Poisoning Associated with Use of Tiro, an Eye Cosmetic from Nigeria](#)