

OTHER OPTIONS

Safe Products

Kohl, surma, kajal, and tiro products sold at US drugstores do not have lead in them. These are safe to use.



Questions?

If you want to know if a product is safe to use, ask your doctor!



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CONTACT INFORMATION



A young girl wearing kohl

Maryland Department of Health (MDH)

Office of Immigrant Health
500 N. Calvert Street, Rm 533
Baltimore, MD 21202

[https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/OIDPCS/OIH/
Pages/Home.aspx](https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/OIDPCS/OIH/Pages/Home.aspx)

Lead Poisoning Screening Program
201 W. Preston Street, Rm 327
Baltimore, MD 21201

[http://phpa.dhmh.maryland.gov/OEhfp/eh/Pages/
Lead.aspx](http://phpa.dhmh.maryland.gov/OEhfp/eh/Pages/Lead.aspx)

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MARYLAND
Department of Health

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THE RISKS OF KOHL, SURMA, KAJAL, AND TIRO



HEALTH INFORMATION ON
LEAD EXPOSURE



Kohl, Surma, Kajal, and Tiro

The Risks of Imported Kohl, Surma, Kajal, & Tiro

What to do if you use these products

What are kohl, kajal, surma, and tiro?

This is a traditional eye makeup that is illegally brought to the US from many countries within Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. It is put on the eyes and skin of women, men, babies, and young children. Some of these products have high levels of lead, which may be bad for your health.



Hashmi Surma Special "Pure kohl from the Hashmi Kohl Aswad Hashmi Kajal

Four products with high lead

Why do people use these products? Are they sunnah?

The Prophet wore kohl made from antimony because it is good for health, so wearing safe kohl is sunnah. But some kohl today is different because it is made from poisonous lead instead of antimony. This makes some kohl harmful to your health, so wearing it or putting it on children may not be sunnah. Some also believe applying kohl will make their eyes bigger.

What are the health risks of lead exposure?

Even small increases in blood lead levels can have harmful health effects, especially for children. These include:

- Lower IQ and attention span, which can cause learning and behavior problems.
- Poor growth and hearing loss.
- High levels of lead can cause bad problems like seizures, coma, and even death.

Who is most affected by exposure to lead?

Children:

- Their bodies are still developing, and damage to their brains is not reversible
- Young children have more hand-to-mouth contact
- Children can absorb more lead than adults because of their thinner skin

Pregnant women:

- Lead can enter mother's bloodstream and be passed on to the baby
- Higher risk of miscarriage
- Baby may be born too early or too small
- Can harm the baby's brain and kidney development



How do I know if I have been exposed to lead?

It is hard to tell the difference between safe and unsafe products. Products may contain lead even if lead is not listed as an ingredient. If a doctor finds high blood-lead levels at your Initial Health Screening, bring your kohl, surma, kajal, or tiro to the **local health department** for testing.

Find your local health department at <https://health.maryland.gov/pages/departments.aspx>

What should I do if someone has been exposed to lead from kohl, kajal, surma, or tiro?

Stop use and take these steps:

1. Wash hands and all surfaces that may have touched the product.
2. Put the product in a plastic bag and call your local health department for disposal.
3. Ask for a blood test for anyone who used the product, especially children, pregnant, and breastfeeding women.
4. Find different products at your local store that have been approved by the FDA.