



Teens, tweens: Beware of cosmetics with toxic ingredients

by Trisha Koriath, Staff Writer

Many parents read the labels on what their kids eat and drink. They shouldn't gloss over cosmetics, which could contain ingredients that may be harmful to young people.

Toxic ingredients have been found in cosmetics marketed to teens and tweens. When this happens, the company and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announce a product recall.

Cosmetic products and ingredients do not have to be tested by the FDA before they are sold. The FDA simply requires them to be safe when used according to their directions.

Many cosmetics include natural elements as ingredients. However, natural does not always mean safe. For example, arsenic, cadmium, lead and mercury are natural elements that have been found in cosmetics but are toxic. Other natural elements sometimes in cosmetics, such as chromium, cobalt and nickel, have caused people to develop sensitivities.

Here are a few ways that parents, teens and tweens can spot blemished cosmetic products:

- **No ingredients are listed, or they are in another language.** Ingredients must be listed on a label in English. If not, the product might have been sold illegally.
- **The toxic ingredients are listed under a different name.** For example, lead might be listed as "kohl," "kajal" or "surma," and mercury might be called "mercurous chloride," "calomel," "mercuric" or "mercurio."
- **Talc is an ingredient.** Talc is a powdery mineral that forms in the ground near the mineral asbestos. Asbestos causes cancer and mesothelioma. If the talc mixes with asbestos when taken from the ground, the contaminated talc could end up in the cosmetic. Asbestos recently was found in eyeshadow, compact powder and contour palates sold to teens and tweens. To see what cosmetics were affected, visit <http://bit.ly/FDAcosmeticrecalls>.

Parents should remind kids to read directions and wash their hands before applying cosmetics. Urge them not to share makeup with others. Any makeup that is stored in a place that is too warm or too moist should be thrown away.

The American Academy of Pediatrics advises parents to choose cosmetics that are labeled non-acnegenic or non-comedogenic. Urge teens and tweens to remove cosmetics at the end of the day by washing with mild soap and water.

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