

## **Shocking! Arsenic on your Lips and Lead in your Eyes**

*Tests reveal 4 brands of Lipstick with high Arsenic levels and 2 brands of Kajal with high Lead content*



Cosmetics are a woman's best friend. They enhance her appearance and give her confidence whether in the boardroom or at a family function. The first use of cosmetics can be traced to 12,000 years ago when ancient Egyptians discovered the healing abilities of scented oils.



Over the years, the allure of cosmetics has only increased – and not just among women.

According to figures given by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), the size of the Indian beauty and cosmetic market is around Rs. 6,049 crore, showing a growth of 15-20% per annum.



However, the cosmetics industry has not kept pace with safety innovations due to a weak regulatory system. This, and ignorance about chemical hazards among consumers, has enabled manufacturers to hide the true toxicity of their products.

## **Products tested**

Consumer Education and Research Centre tested the following brands of Lipsticks and Kajals.

### **Lipsticks**

- 1. *Maybelline New York***
- 2. *Colorbar USA Crème Touch Lipstick***
- 3. *Lakme Enrich lipcolor***
- 4. *Revlon super lustrous lipstick***
- 5. *Passion***
- 6. *ADS Professional Lipstick***
- 7. *TYA Herbal Lip***
- 8. *Kiss Beauty Lipstick***
- 9. *Coloressence Mesmerising Lip Colour***
- 10. *7 Heaven's Super Matte Lipstick***
- 11. *MakeOver Professional***
- 12. *Tian Nuo***

## Test Report

Brand/Manufacture/ Standard	Rank	Total Score <sup>6</sup> (%)	Price (Rs)	Weight (g)	Arsenic <sup>4</sup> (mg/kg)	Lead <sup>4</sup> (mg/kg)	Labelling Score <sup>5</sup>
BIS Limit					Maximum 2mg/kg	Maximum 20mg/kg	
<i>Maybelline New York</i>	1	96	399	4.2	BQL <sup>1</sup>	BQL <sup>1</sup>	80
<i>Colorbar USA Crème Touch Lipstick</i>	2	95	475	4.5	BQL	0.28	80
<i>Lakme Enrich lipcolor</i>	2	95	240	4.4 ml	BQL	0.43	80
<i>Revlon super lustrous lipstick</i>	3	91	550	3.7	BQL	0.29	60
<i>Passion</i>	4	84	20	NA <sup>3</sup>	BQL	BQL	20
<i>ADS Professional Lipstick</i>	5	83	50	NA	BQL	0.26	20
<i>TYA Herbal Lip</i>	6	80	30	4.5	0.18	0.15	20
<i>Kiss Beauty Lipstick</i>	7	79	50	NA	BQL	0.46	0
<b>Failure Brand<sup>2</sup></b>							
<b><i>Coloressence Mesmerising Lip Colour</i></b>			<b>175</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>9.59</b>	<b>2.96</b>	<b>80</b>
<b><i>MakeOver Professional</i></b>			<b>200</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>8.28</b>	<b>2.58</b>	<b>80</b>
<b><i>7 Heaven's Super Matte Lipstick</i></b>			<b>120</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>9.28</b>	<b>2.68</b>	<b>40</b>
<b><i>Tian Nuo</i></b>			<b>90</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>9.22</b>	<b>4.97</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Weightage (%)</b>					<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>20</b>

Note: <sup>1</sup>BQL-Below Quantification Level (what cannot be measured)

<sup>2</sup>Fail in Arsenic

<sup>3</sup> Not available because not mentioned on packet

<sup>4</sup>Not good for Lead and Arsenic

<sup>5</sup>Labelling Score for 5 reasons: Date of expiry, Batch Number, Address of manufacturer/distributor, Licence number and direction for use

<sup>6</sup>Total score calculation on Arsenic- 40%, Lead- 40% and labelling 20%

Kajals

1. *Maybelline New York colossal kajal*
2. *Himalaya Herbals Kajal Extra Smooth*
3. *KhojatiMumtazDeluxKajal*
4. *Lakmekajal black Eyeconic*
5. *Blueheavan Indian Kajal*
6. *Jay Kajal*
7. *Ambar Kajal*
8. *Clarion Long Wearing Matt Kajal/Eye Liner*
9. *L'Oreal Paris KajalMagique*
10. *ADS Kajal Pencil*
11. *Niki Kajal*
12. *Rashmi Herbal Kajal*

## Test Report

Brand/Manufacture/ Standard	Rank	Total Score <sup>6</sup> (%)	Price (Rs)	Weight (g)	Lead <sup>4</sup> (mg/kg)	Labelling Score <sup>5</sup>
BIS Limit					Maximum 20mg/kg	
<i>Maybelline New York colossal kajal</i>	1	100	199	0.35	BQL <sup>1</sup>	100
<i>Himalaya Herbals Kajal Extra Smooth</i>	2	99	45	1.0	0.16	100
<i>KhojatiMumtazDeluxKajal</i>	2	99	40	4.0	0.26	100
<i>Lakmekajal black Eyeconic</i>	3	98	200	0.35	0.62	100
<i>Blueheavan Indian Kajal</i>	4	97	20	2.5	0.77	100
<i>Jay Kajal</i>	5	91	13	2.5	0.82	80
<i>Ambar Kajal</i>	6	71	13	NA <sup>3</sup>	1.41	20
<i>Clarion Long Wearing Matt Kajal/Eye Liner</i>	7	69	10	NA	1.89	20
<i>L'Oreal Paris KajalMagique</i>	8	68	245	0.35	0.66	0
<i>ADS Kajal Pencil</i>	9	65	20	NA	1.46	0
<i>Niki Kajal</i>	10	41	12	3.0	15.41	80
<b>Failure Brand<sup>2</sup></b>						
<b><i>Rashmi Herbal Kajal</i></b>			<b>20</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>48.01</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Weightage (%)</b>					<b>70</b>	<b>30</b>

Note: <sup>1</sup>BQL-Below Quantification Level (what cannot be measured)

<sup>2</sup>Fail in Arsenic

<sup>3</sup> Not available because not mentioned on packet

<sup>4</sup>Not good for Lead and Arsenic

<sup>5</sup>Labelling Score for 5 reasons: Date of expiry, Batch Number, Address of manufacturer/distributor, License number and direction for use

<sup>6</sup>Total score calculation on Lead- 70% and labelling 30%

## Alarming findings

Shockingly high levels of Arsenic in Lipstick and Lead in Kajal were found when CERC tested 12 brands each for safety against the standards set by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS).

Tests revealed alarmingly high levels of Arsenic in four brands of Lipstick. While the BIS has set the limit of 2mg/kg, **Colorescence Mesmerising Lip Colour** contained the highest level of 9.59mg/kg followed by **7 Heaven's Super Matte Lipstick** (9.28mg/kg), **Tian Nuo** (9.22mg/kg) and **MakeOver Professional** (8.28mg/kg).

In the case of lipsticks, the premise that all that is expensive is safe and good is true but the converse is not. For instance, **Passion**, the lowest in price (Rs. 20) also had a good overall score of 84%. It contained Arsenic and Lead in amounts too tiny to measure.

The test results for Kajal were equally disturbing. Two brands had alarmingly high levels of Lead. **Rashmi Herbal Kajal** had 48.91mg/kg, more than double the maximum limit of 20mg/kg set by BIS. **Niki Kajal** had high Lead content of 15.14mg/kg.

In the case of Kajal, the premise that higher the price better the product does not hold true. For instance, **L'Oreal Paris Kajal Magique** priced at Rs 245 had a score of 68 compared to **Himalaya Herbals Kajal Extra Smooth** with a low price of Rs. 45 but a score of 99!

### **Adverse health effects**

Heavy metals can be absorbed easily as cosmetics are applied to the delicate facial skin, eyes and lips. Even minute amounts of toxic chemicals applied regularly can cause an adverse cumulative effect.

Long-term exposure to Arsenic (if ingested) can cause cancer, skin lesions, hair loss, developmental effects, cardiovascular disease, neurotoxicity and diabetes. Exposure to Lead has adverse effects on numerous organs and systems. It can cause brain and kidney damage, hearing loss and miscarriage. Lead also gets stored in the bones.

**No 'Use Before' date:** Use Before/Expiry dates are vital in the case of cosmetics as beyond these dates the products may deteriorate and cause adverse health issues. The following brands did not mention this important information:

Lipstick: **T.Y.A Herbal Lip, Kiss Beauty, ADS Professional and Passion**

Kajal: **ADSKajal Pencil, NikiKajal, AmbarKajal and Clarion Long Wearing Matt Kajal/Eye Liner**

Nail Polish: **Surbhi, Ebony, Vove, WOW and Dozy**

Manufacturers' response: None of the five failing brands of Lipstick and Kajal responded to our queries till the time of going to press. Some brands said that they were exempted from mentioning net contents because of small pack size.

As for Hair Colour, **L'Oreal, Garnier** and **Revlon** did not think it necessary to list hazardous ingredients on the label as required by the law. On phone, **Panchavati** said mentioning hazards would drive away customers.

### **Action taken by CERC**

CERC made a representation to the Drugs Controller General of India, (DCGI), Ministry of Consumer Affairs (MoCA) and BIS on the matter. MoCA responded saying that national standards are being amended to conform to WHO/global standards and would be enforced soon.

BIS responded that no action was presently called for with respect to heavy metals in Lipstick and Kajal as the limits had been recently reviewed by the Technical Committee under the chairmanship of the DCGI.

Cosmetics with poisonous substances like Arsenic and Lead are in the market. The Regulatory Authorities need to address this issue. Also, they should make it mandatory for manufacturers to list heavy metals on the labels.

### **What you can do**

CERC suggests that consumers should:

- i. Opt for reputed brands where they can check with the store or company about ingredients
- ii. Not go for cheap brands found to have inadequate labelling information
- iii. Stop using any cosmetic that causes irritation to the eyes or skin
- iv. Limit use of cosmetics to special occasions

Source: GrahakSathi Volume 1 No. 2 August – September 2015