

Warning issued for temporary tattoo ink**Aug. 12, 2003****Provided by: Canadian Press**

OTTAWA (CP) -- The ingredient para-phenylenediamine, or PPD, in black henna temporary tattoo ink and paste is unsafe and shouldn't be used, Health Canada has warned.

Allergic reactions to PPD include red skin rashes, contact dermatitis, itching, blisters, open sores, scarring and other potentially harmful effects. Allergic reactions to PPD may also lead to sensitivity to other products such as hair dye, sun block and some types of black clothing.

PPD is an acceptable ingredient in hair dyes that, when used correctly, does not come into contact with skin for prolonged periods of time. But PPD in cosmetics applied to the skin for prolonged periods of time poses a risk. As such, black henna temporary tattoo ink and paste containing PPD is not considered safe.

Cosmetics containing PPD and applied directly to the skin are illegal in Canada. This includes black henna temporary tattoos containing PPD, which are often sold and applied by artisans at markets, fairs and amusement parks.

Before receiving a temporary tattoo, ask the vendor to confirm that PPD is not being used in the ink or paste. Health Canada permits the use of natural henna and other safe dyes in cosmetics.

Here are some things to look for if you suspect PPD is being used in black henna tattoo ink or paste:

PPD in black henna is used for its long-lasting properties and intense black colour. If the formula and resulting tattoo are jet black, the ink or paste may contain PPD. If the tattoo is to be removed within an hour, the ink or paste may contain PPD. PPD stains typically last one to three weeks, without fading; and, PPD-black henna mixes usually have little or no scent.

Contact your nearest Health Canada Product Safety Office if you suspect a vendor is using PPD.