



# Face paint and kids cosmetics

**We've got advice about how to safely use and buy face paints and kids cosmetics.**

## Introduction

Like all cosmetic and toiletry products sold in New Zealand, children's toy cosmetics and face paints must comply with rules to make sure they are safe for use.

The EPA sets the rules for cosmetics and toiletries to protect people's health and safety.

## Staying safe

Face paints are made of chemicals that can be harmful if they aren't used and stored carefully. Your best bet to keep your kids safe is to read and follow the information on the label and to follow our advice. If the label isn't in English or doesn't list the ingredients, it's not compliant. If possible, buy face paints from a retailer that you know and trust.



## Key Points

- Only use skin paints and glitters that are made for that purpose. Even non-toxic craft paints can cause skin reactions.
- Buy face paints and cosmetics from retailers that you know and trust.
- If you are in any doubt about the safety of a product – don't buy or use it.
- If the label isn't in English or doesn't list the ingredients the product isn't compliant with the rules.
- Read the label and follow the instructions – many face paints shouldn't be used around the eyes.
- Patch test the product on whoever will be wearing it a few days before use.
- Store face paints and cosmetics out of reach of small children. Even if the product says it's non-toxic and natural it could be dangerous if it were swallowed.
- Don't use face paints that smell bad, even if they are new. It may mean that bacteria are growing in the paint.
- Don't leave face paints on overnight. If they are worn too long they can irritate the skin.
- Remove the face paint by following the instructions on the face paint's packaging.

## Patch test

Patch testing is a way of finding out whether a product is likely to irritate your skin or cause an allergic reaction when it is applied to a larger area. Different people have different sensitivities to products so even though a product might be ok for you, it could cause a reaction on someone else. Children can be more sensitive to products than adults.

Patch tests involve applying a small amount of the product to a small area of skin, like the underside of your wrist. If a reaction, such as a red mark or rash appears then it's best not to use that product on that person.

## Advice if someone has a reaction

If someone has a severe reaction to a product, get medical advice from your doctor or call Healthline on 0800 611 116.

If you have an allergic or other reaction to a product stop using it immediately and return it to the place you bought it.

## Further information

Email: [info@epa.govt.nz](mailto:info@epa.govt.nz)

**Freephone (within New Zealand):**

0800 429 7827

**Phone from overseas:** +64 4 916 2426

**Postal address:**

Environmental Protection Authority  
Private Bag 63002, Wellington 6140,  
New Zealand.

**Physical address:**

Level 10, Grant Thornton House,  
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