

Dutchess County Department of Behavioral & Community Health

PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY*

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Marcus J. Molinaro
County Executive



Margaret Hirst, LCSW-R
Acting Commissioner

ELEVATED BLOOD LEAD LEVELS IN INFANTS ASSOCIATED WITH USE OF KOHL (KAJAL) AROUND EYES

Tuesday, December 13, 2016 - 12 pm

Kohl (Kajal) is a popular eye care product used since ancient times. Some preparations of kohl/kajal may contain lead which can potentially be absorbed systemically through the eyelid/conjunctivae.

The Department of Behavioral & Community Health recommends the following:

- Since the use of Kohl (Kajal) to outline an infant's eyes as part of a cultural practice has been observed in infants locally, and test results have indicated elevated blood lead levels, healthcare providers are advised to look for the use of kohl around the eyes of infants during exams. If found, physicians should inquire to see if the product used is imported and if so, educate parents against its use; and test the infant for lead.
- Because lead is found in many imported products, providers may want to share the following helpful flyer from NYC Department of Health and Mental Health with their patients who may have family abroad:
<http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/lead/lead-fact-sheet.pdf>
- All infants are to be routinely tested for lead at ages one and two.

For more information about Lead Poisoning Prevention, please call the Dutchess County Department of Behavioral & Community Health at (845) 486-3419.

***Health Alert**- conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention; **Health Advisory**- provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action; **Health Update**- provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

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85 Civic Center Plaza - Suite 106, Poughkeepsie NY 12601 • (845) 486-3400 • Fax (845) 486-3447 • TTY (845) 486-3417