



**For Immediate Release  
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**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH WARNS PUBLIC OF POTENTIAL FOR SKIN  
DAMAGE CAUSED BY IMPROPER USE OF HENNA IN TEMPORARY TATTOOS**

**TALLAHASSEE** -- Hoping to prevent additional cases of skin-damaging reactions to henna tattoos, the Florida Department of Health (DOH) is advising Florida residents and visitors of risks associated with having them applied.

Henna, a coloring made from a plant, is approved for use as a hair dye only and not for direct application to the skin, according to the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

DOH's warning is further substantiated by an import alert issued by the FDA for several foreign-made temporary tattoos that contain unapproved color additives. This alert is currently being enforced at ports of entry throughout the United States.

"We want to ensure that Floridians are aware of the potential dangers associated with this type of tattoo and can make informed decisions for themselves and for their families," said DOH Secretary John O. Agwunobi, M.D., M.B.A.

Some henna tattoos that are being marketed in the US contain a product called p-phenylenediamine (PPD). A petroleum derivative, this dye can be added to the paste used in temporary tattoos to produce a darker shaded image known as a "black henna tattoo". When applied to the skin, this ingredient may cause allergic reactions in some individuals, such as intense itching, redness of the skin, swelling and scarring at the tattoo site.

All cosmetics, including skin-staining products that are sold in the retail market must have their ingredients listed on the label, based upon guidelines under the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act.

Floridians and visitors to Florida are urged to consider potential risks before having any type of tattoo applied to their skin. Persons who experience any adverse skin reactions to a tattoo should seek immediate medical attention. Incidences should also be reported to the local health department to assist state officials in tracking unanticipated problems from tattoos.

This alert is not associated with "decal" type tattoos that are applied to the skin with a moistened cotton ball. This type of tattoo fades several days after application.

Additional information on tattoos may be obtained at DOH's website at [www.doh.state.fl.us](http://www.doh.state.fl.us). FDA's website is located at [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov). Consumers can also contact FDA's Office of Cosmetics and Colors at 1-202-401-9725.

File photos (jpeg format) showing the scarring resulting from a henna tattoo are attached.

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