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## Parents advised to check labelling on face paints

### HPRA recommends vigilance with children's cosmetics ahead of Halloween

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Parents were today advised to check the labelling on face paints to ensure that they are safe to use and are from a reputable manufacturer. The Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) gave the warning today in light of the fact that one in five parents (21%) don't read the product information before buying these products for their children. The HPRA states that parents need to be vigilant of the dangers posed by sub-standard face paints which, in the past, have been found to contain harmful substances.

The HPRA survey released today revealed that 88% of parents allow their children to have their faces painted, with half (49%) saying that their children wear face paints up to five times in a given year. Two thirds (66%) are likely to allow their children to wear face paints this Halloween. However, 9 out of 10 parents (91%) don't know to check for an EU address on the labelling when purchasing products, a requirement set down by European legislation and considered by the HPRA to be the most important thing to look out for.

High levels of heavy metals have been found in some brands of children's cosmetics available in Europe in recent years and parents should be aware that the standard of products available can vary.

To ensure that children are not exposed to potentially harmful products, the HPRA advises that parents should:

- Buy from a reputable source where the product can be traced to a supplier;
- Check for an EU address on the product packaging; Cosmetics on the EU market are required to have an EU address on the packaging. The absence of an EU address indicates that the product has been imported from outside the EU and may not meet European requirements for safety;
- Check if any warnings are listed on the packaging advising not to use the product on children;
- Follow all directions for use carefully as products can sometimes irritate the skin if used incorrectly.

Six out of ten parents (61%) are concerned with price when purchasing such products. In response, the HPRA cautions against the use of a product where the price appears inexplicably low. Parents should make sure they are purchasing from a reputable source and they should check that sufficient information about the use, origin and product ingredients is available.

Encouragingly, over seven in ten parents (72%) consider the ingredient lists on products before purchasing face paints for their children.

According to Aoife Farrell, Cosmetics Compliance Manager, HPRA, whilst no safety issues have arisen recently from face paints in Ireland she advises that there is a need to be mindful of the nature of the product being applied to young skin.

“We always advise parents to check for the presence of an EU address on the packaging. This indicates that there is a European company responsible for the product on the EU market ensuring it meets the requirements of the European regulations with respect to safety. We are mindful there is an extensive range of face paint products available on the market coming from a wide variety of sources at hugely varying prices so this is a key thing to check. Our concern stems from the fact that even very small levels of certain ingredients, which may be undeclared on the labelling, can cause harm and irritation to children’s skin,” Ms Farrell states.

The market surveillance programme for cosmetic products, including children’s face paints, toy make-up sets and other similar products is co-ordinated by the HPRA and the HSE’s Environmental Health Service and Public Analysts’ Laboratories. At this time of year, the surveillance programme routinely includes specific focus on children’s face paints.

If parents have any concerns about the safety or quality of particular face paints, or they identify face paints without an EU address on the packaging, the HPRA is advising them not to purchase or use these products and report their concerns to the HPRA.

**ENDS**

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

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**ABOUT THE HEALTH PRODUCTS REGULATORY AUTHORITY**

The Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) protects and enhances public health and animal health by regulating medicines, medical devices and other health products. The products under its remit include human and veterinary medicines, medical devices, blood and blood components, tissues and cells, organs for transplantation and cosmetics.