

COSMETICS & YOUR EYE HEALTH

When was the last time you looked at the use-by date on your mascara? Or checked whether your eye shadow or foundation was still usable?

Many of us use make-up well beyond the expiry date. Frequently, these products have a high level of dirt and bacteria – that can lead to eye infections and contribute to blepharitis, a non-contagious condition that occurs when the glands around your eyelashes become blocked or infected.

Signs of eye infection include: soreness, itching, or sensation of a foreign body in the eye; red eyes; crusty eyes when you wake up or watery eyes.

If you develop any of these symptoms you should avoid wearing eye make-up until symptoms have subsided and replace any out-of-date cosmetics.

You should also throw away any products that have changed consistency or colour, or if you notice a strange smell coming from it.

See your high-street optician if your symptoms of an eye infection are severe or persist.

A College of Optometrists survey of UK make-up users found that over half (53%) don't check the instructions to see how long they should keep their mascara for, and almost a fifth (19%) admitted they didn't even know that expiry information even existed on such products.

The Cosmetic, Toiletry & Perfumery Association stipulates that cosmetic products must show a 'period after opening' (POA) time. This relates to the amount of time that the product will remain in good condition after it has been used for the first time.

Look out for an egg timer or open jar symbol on cosmetic packaging for advice on how long you can keep a product after opening – 6m = six months.

And, don't forget to wash your make-up sponges and brushes regularly; keep cosmetic pencils sharpened to expose a clean and germ-free nib and apply make-up outside the lash line to avoid blocking the glands on your upper and lower eyelid.

www.visionmatters.org.uk

Other habits in our Ten Best Eye Health Habits series include: eating a healthy balanced diet, being active, protecting your eyes from the sun's damaging UV rays and watching your weight.