



Face Painting Health Guidelines (Australia)

Face painting may be fun, but spreading illness or infection is not. Whether you're a volunteer, amateur, or professional face painter, it's important make yourself familiar with proper hygiene practices BEFORE you pick up a brush. All face painters are to have Working with Children's approval.

In the interest of public safety, the following recommendations for face painters of all levels should be familiar with, and adhere to, strict hygiene practices at all times.

There are currently no formal health or safety guidelines for face painting in Australia. The Department of Public Health in Western Australia has published [health guidelines for face painters](#) and The NSW Department of Health has also issued a [fact sheet](#). Both of these have been consulted in the preparation of these recommended guidelines.

Disclaimer: *Please note the information provided herein is general in nature and does not constitute medical advice. In all cases, independent professional medical advice should be obtained for individual circumstances.*

BEFORE STARTING

- It is not advisable to paint a child's face if they are younger than three years old.
- If the client or child has sensitive skin, food allergies or reactions to soaps, creams, dyes, they should advise the artist who may perform a small patch test first, or may choose not to paint the child.
- The client or child must have clean abrasion-free skin, and must not have conjunctivitis, lice, cold or flu, chicken pox or any other infection. Painting faces with acne should also be avoided.
- The clients face (or other area to be painted – arm or leg) shall be cleaned with soap and warm water or a moist towelette prior to having their face painted, taking care around eyes, and wiping runny noses.
- **Parents / guardians are to supervise their child while being painted at all times.**
- Have enough supplies on hand to ensure used sponges, brushes and applicators are quarantined after each use. These should be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized before being reused.





PAINTS AND SUPPLIES

- Paints, inks, glitters and other cosmetic preparations must be safe and specifically designed for use on human skin.
- “Non-toxic” on the labels does not necessarily mean that it is safe to use on the skin. Some people are allergic to approved chemicals and colorants used in craft paints (eg acrylics) and other stationery products.
- Paints and supplies should be stored and handled in a sanitary manner to avoid contamination.
- Paints and supplies should be purchased from approved face painter supply outlets.

CLEANING & DISINFECTION OF BRUSHES AND TOOLS

- The water used for cleaning the brushes should be changed for every client.
- Single-use disposable applicators (e.g. cotton swabs and sponges) are strongly recommended, and
- If reusable paint brushes or sponges are used, they should be washed thoroughly in warm water and soap and then soaked in 70% isopropyl alcohol for at least two minutes, and dried before being used on a new client. Sponges can be air dried in the sun for several hours, which will kill 99% of bacteria.
- Reusable stencils should be made of non-porous and cleanable materials which can be wiped with 70% isopropyl alcohol after each use.
- Disposable paper towels should be used

HYGIENE

- The artist should wash his or her hands prior to each face or body painting session.
- Disposable hand wipes and hand sanitizer can be used as an alternative to hand washing between clients.
- Careful attention should be paid when painting the areas near the eyes, especially on very young children and those unable to keep still.
- If hair control is needed, single-use elastic or hair pin should be used.

WARNING

Some individuals may have an allergic reaction to even the most pure and non-toxic colours. If the client shows any type of allergic reaction during the painting procedure (e.g. paleness, shortness of breath, difficulty in breathing, undue swelling, puffiness around the eyes) the painting session should be discontinued and emergency medical attention should be obtained.

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