



# CONSUMERS ASSOCIATION OF SINGAPORE

170 Ghim Moh Road, #05-01, Ulu Pandan Community Building, Singapore 279621

Hotline: 6100 0315 Fax: 6467 9055

Website: [www.case.org.sg](http://www.case.org.sg)

## MEDIA RELEASE

---

**For Immediate Release**

**20 December 2021**

### **CASE finds lipsticks sold in Singapore and on e-commerce platforms to be within regulatory limits for toxic metals**

The Consumers Association of Singapore ("CASE") commissioned a test on 30 lipsticks sold in Singapore and on e-commerce platforms for toxic metals, lead and cadmium. The test results showed that all 30 samples were within the permissible limit for trace amounts of lead and cadmium. Significant or cumulative exposure for a prolonged period to lead and cadmium can cause severe adverse effects such as abdominal pains and renal failure.

#### **Background**

Studies have found lipsticks containing substances that can cause harmful side effects for users.

In June 2020, the Health Sciences Authority ("HSA") flagged out lipsticks containing ingredients that are not allowed because of possible harmful side effects<sup>1</sup>. Studies elsewhere have detected lead and other metals at levels that could raise potential health concerns<sup>2</sup>. As lipsticks are applied on the lips, there is a risk that these substances may be ingested by the user.

Even though lead is prohibited as an ingredient in the manufacturing of cosmetic products, it may be a naturally occurring contaminant of the pigments, which are added to give colour to the lipsticks. Through cumulative exposure, lead could build up in the body over time, leading to a significant exposure. When exposed for a prolonged period, it is known to cause abdominal pains, constipation and nausea.

Similarly, cadmium may also be found in the pigments used to make lipsticks. High levels of cadmium could lead to renal failure, especially for those with compromised renal systems, such as those with diabetes or undergoing kidney dialysis.

#### **Regulations**

Cosmetic products sold in Singapore must comply with the requirements under the Health Products Act and its Health Products (Cosmetic Products - ASEAN Cosmetic Directive) Regulations 2007 ("the Regulations"). Under the ASEAN Cosmetic Directive ("ACD") and the Regulations in Singapore, lead and cadmium are prohibited to be used as ingredients in cosmetic products.

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.hsa.gov.sg/docs/default-source/announcements/safety-alerts/foreign-alert\\_2020\\_june\\_final-27jun2020.pdf](https://www.hsa.gov.sg/docs/default-source/announcements/safety-alerts/foreign-alert_2020_june_final-27jun2020.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://news.berkeley.edu/2013/05/02/toxic-metals-in-lipstick/>

However, lead and cadmium are allowed in cosmetic products in trace amounts or when it is technically unavoidable. Trace amounts of lead (20µg/g) and cadmium (5µg/g) are allowed.

### **Samples**

The samples for this test were selected by random sampling with samples purchased from well-known cosmetic retailers, pharmacies, major departmental stores and convenience/value stores in the heartlands. To take into consideration the shift in consumer behaviour towards online shopping, samples were also purchased from popular e-commerce platforms.

With the shift in consumer shopping behaviour, many consumers are buying cosmetics from e-commerce platforms. Some of these products may be shipped directly to consumers in Singapore from another country. Such products may fall outside of HSA's regulatory surveillance regime.

### **Methodology**

The samples were tested using a methodology accredited by the Singapore Laboratory Accreditation Scheme administered by the Singapore Accreditation Council ("SAC-SINGLAS"). The test for lead and cadmium was conducted using Inductively Coupled Plasma-Mass Spectrometry ("ICPMS") where the samples are broken down with a microwave digestion system with the aid of acids. From there, analysis is done to determine the presence and amounts of lead and cadmium (if any).

### **Test Results**

According to the test results, the trace amounts for lead and cadmium found in all samples are within the regulatory limit of not more than 20µg/g for lead and 5µg/g for cadmium. Notably, nine lipstick samples purchased from e-commerce platforms were also found to be within regulatory limits.

The highest trace amount for lead detected is at 3.13µg/g while all lipstick samples except one had no cadmium detected. Given the severity of the effects that trace amounts of lead and cadmium can cause, we are heartened to see that the lipstick samples in our test are within regulatory limits.

The full findings of the test can be found in Annex A.

### **Consumer Advice**

Notwithstanding the test results, CASE would like to advise consumers on the following:

- Read the product label. Follow any special instructions and heed all warnings before purchase.
- Avoid products without a product label.
- If you find yourself having to apply lipstick on a daily basis, consider switching to a more natural product where there are lesser risks of toxins ingestion.
- Consumers concerned with the presence of toxic metals such as lead and cadmium can consider looking out for non-toxic or lead-free labels on cosmetic products.
- If you are buying cosmetic products through e-commerce platforms or online shopping sites, buy only from reliable and verified sources.

Lee Siow Hwee  
Executive Director  
Consumers Association of Singapore

**Consumers Association of Singapore:**

The Consumers Association of Singapore (CASE) is an independent, non-profit organisation that is committed towards protecting consumers' interest through information and education, and promoting an environment of fair and ethical trade practices. One of its key achievements is in advocating for the Consumer Protection (Fair Trading) Act (CPFTA) which came into effect on 1 March 2004.

For more information, please visit the CASE website at [www.case.org.sg](http://www.case.org.sg) or follow us on:

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/casesg](http://www.facebook.com/casesg)

Twitter: [www.twitter.com/casesg](http://www.twitter.com/casesg)

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSSCQGUHuR7HW0AgpbPy7wg>

## Annex A – List of 30 Lipstick Products Tested and the Results

S/N	Name	Place of Purchase	Sample Details	Lead (µg/g)	Cadmium (µg/g)
S01	benefit MOISTURIZING LIP BALM 99 POPPY	Sephora	OA03	ND	ND
S02	CANMAKE TOKYO 04	WelciaBHG	912F1 EXP 06/2023	ND	ND
S03	Summer Palace CATKIN CR139	Lazada (e-commerce platform)	9K02001 20230511	ND	ND
S04	CATRICE COSMETICS PLUMPING GEL LIPSTICK 060	Guardian Health & Beauty	Mfg Date: 10/2018	ND	ND
S05	clé de peau BEAUTÉ ROUGE À LÈVRES LIPSTICK 4 Lotus Flower	Tangs	7178 BEST BEF 06-2022	ND	ND
S06	CLIO Mad MATTE 11 PETAL PEACH	Shopee (e-commerce platform)	BJ602 EXP 2023.07.27	ND	ND
S07	COLOURPOP lux lipstick LITTLE LEAGUE	Shopee (e-commerce platform)	-	ND	ND
S08	DABO MAKE UP REAL ROUGE MATTE 114 Holiday	Orange Department Store	HN0905 EXP 2021.09.04.	ND	ND
S09	excel PUPPY GIRL LIP VELVETIST LV01	Watsons	XEB Exp: 12/2023	ND	ND
S10	fmgt ROUGE SATIN MOISTURE MUTED PINK PK02	TheFaceShop	AGU EXP 20220711	< 1.50	ND
S11	HANDAIYAN 02	Lazada (e-commerce platform)	2020/12/02 EXP:2024/12/01	1.82	< 1.50
S12	Heartful Glossy Lipstick Holika Holika PK122 Humming Pink	Pink Beauty	-	ND	ND
S13	km® 10 MAGENTA MOON™ Natural Lipstick	Lazada (e-commerce platform)	229231 Expiry Date: 10.2021	< 1.50	ND

S14	TOKYO KATE color highvision rouge PK-4	WelciaBHG	3418 2018/12/07	ND	ND
S15	Kylie MATTE LIP STICK 33	Gandang Pinay By D Fashionista	-	< 1.50	ND
S16	M.A.C POWDER KISS LIPSTICK ROUGE À LÈVRES 306 SHOCKING REVELATION	Sephora	B89	ND	ND
S17	MAYBELLINE 691 RICH RUBY	Pink Beauty	Mfg072019 72S701	< 1.50	ND
S18	MINISO JAPAN PERFECTLY DEFINED METALLIC LIPSTICK 02 Amber	MINISO	AF MFG 04/09/2019 EXP 03/09/2022	3.13	ND
S19	MISSHA DARE ROUGE VELVET #25. MALA RED	Shopee (e-commerce platform)	K28S06 20221127	ND	ND
S20	NARS LIPSTICK ROUGE À LÈVRES TONKA MATTE 2991	Tangs	0028	< 1.50	ND
S21	NATASHA DENONA I NEED A NUDE lipstick rouge à lèvres 6B LALA	Sephora	S191	ND	ND
S22	peripera INK SERUM STICK 01 FRESH PINK	Watsons	BJF01 EXP20230715	ND	ND
S23	rom&nd zero matte SWEET PEA	Guardian Health & Beauty	CCU 2022.09.21	ND	ND
S24	SEPHORA Lipstick Pop red	Sephora	0300A 20231025	ND	ND
S25	SHISEIDO VisionAiry Gel Lipstick 219 Firecracker	Isetan Singapore	0154 BEST BEF: 06-2023	ND	ND
S26	smashbox ALWAYS ON CREAM TO MATTE LIPSTICK HOOPS ON	Qoo10 (e-commerce platform)	A69	ND	ND
S27	TOM FORD LIP COLOR MATTE ROUGE À LÈVRES MAT 09 TRUE CORAL	Sephora	AB9	ND	ND

S28	TONYMOLY PERFECT LIPS Lip Cashimere 05 Destiny	Qoo10 (e-commerce platform)	-	ND	ND
S29	WAKEMAKE ROUGE GUN ZERO 02 KILL ME RED	Guardian Health & Beauty	20220924	ND	ND
S30	wet n wild® megalast LIQUID Catsuit Berry Recognize E926B	Lazada (e-commerce platform)	EXP 01/2023	ND	ND

Note:

ND refers to Not Detected.

Limit of Detection for Lead and Cadmium: 0.50µg/g.

Limit of Quantification for Lead and Cadmium: 1.50µg/g.