

Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Getting More Than A Tattoo

(COLDWATER, MI) –The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is warning residents of a potential health problem associated with unopened bottles of ink and on needles included in tattoo kits marketed and distributed by White and Blue Lion, Inc. FDA has confirmed bacterial contamination in unopened bottles of the company’s inks. According to Linda Katz, M.D., M.P.H., Director of FDA’s Office of Cosmetics and Colors, using these inks for tattoos could cause infection. “FDA has confirmed one case of skin infection involving a consumer that used this company’s tattoo products,” Katz says, “and we are aware of other reports linked to tattoo products with similar packaging.”

Katz goes on to say, “Tattooing poses a risk of infection to anyone, but the risk is particularly high for those with pre-existing heart or circulatory disease, diabetes or compromised immune systems.” She notes that injecting contaminated ink into the skin or using contaminated needles may result in infections at the site of the tattoo. Signs of localized infection include redness, swelling, weeping wounds, blemishes, or excessive pain at the site.

If you experience any of these signs, seek medical care right away. Even after a localized infection has healed, the area may be permanently scarred. Further, an infection that is left untreated or inadequately treated could spread through the bloodstream (a process known as sepsis). These infections may be associated with fever, shaking chills (rigors) and sweats. If these symptoms arise, treatment with antibiotics, hospitalization and/or surgery may be required.

White and Blue Lion, Inc. recalled contaminated products on July 11, 2014, but FDA is still concerned that consumers and professional tattoo artists may be purchasing or using contaminated tattoo kits and inks from other distributors. Specifically, how can you identify kits and inks that you should not use because they may be contaminated? FDA advises you to watch out for inks intended for permanent makeup or traditional body tattoos that:

- have no brand name, carry a dragon logo, and/or are missing the name and place of business of the manufacturer or distributor,
- are sold singly and in kits containing anywhere from five to 54, or perhaps more, bottles of inks of various colors, and
- are marked with “Lotch” [sic] and Batch numbers, and “Date produced” and “Best if used by” dates.

Rebecca Burns, Environmental Health Director for the tri-county health agency emphasizes the need to go to licensed body art providers. “We know that licensed body art facilities have been notified of the recall. Our concern is with people who are using ‘unlicensed providers’.” She adds, “Always obtain a body art procedure at a licensed facility and ask for information about the ink and needles that they use.”

The local health department is working to assist FDA in meeting its goal, which is to encourage consumers and tattoo and permanent make-up artists to take certain precautions. They also urge potentially infected clients to seek medical care. Reporting an infection to FDA and the artist is important in order for FDA to investigate, and to enable the artist to take steps to prevent others from becoming infected.

If you are a tattoo artist that has used the products mentioned above, or if you are someone who suspects that the products mentioned above were used in your tattoo, the health department suggests you do the following:

- Seek immediate medical care if you experience any signs of infection.
- Don’t use tattoo inks and kits that have no brand name, carry a dragon logo, and/or are missing the name and place of business of the manufacturer or distributor.
- Dispose of tattoo inks that meet this description.
- Do not use recalled kits.

- Report adverse events or side effects through FDA's [MedWatch Safety Information and Adverse Event Reporting Program](#).

To learn more about the on-site body art safety and the inspection process used during the licensing process, you can contact your local county's health department office or visit our website at www.bhsj.org.

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