

## Dermatologists warn against colours

KATHMANDU: As Holi -the Hindu festival of colours-is celebrated across the country today with fun and mayhem, dermatologists have cautioned against meddling with artificial colours.

According to dermatologist Dr Anil Kumar Jha, professor and head of the department, Nepal Medical College, the unhealthy practice of people using multiple colours is resulting in various skin diseases and skin disorders.

He has urged every Holy-enthusiast to use only natural colours to smear the faces or spray.

Natural products like henna, turmeric, dry rose petals are recommended by skin and eye specialists for use in Holy.

"The unnatural colors and the alternate synthetic colors that are available in the market may lead to allergy, rashes on the skin, frizzy hair and eye irritation," he said.

The alternate colors available in the market contain toxic components like engine oil, copper sulphate, chromium iodine and diesel, warned Jha.

Talking to The Himalayan Times on the eve of Holy, he urged people to use single colour rather than multiple colours to avoid skin infections.

He further said that the heavy use of detergent to remove the colours may result to dryness in the skin accompanied by rashes. He asked people to use Aabir than other powders. He strictly asked people to prohibit the uses of black enamel and diesels.

Dr Hira Mana Pradhan, dermatologist and leprologist at Sewa Centre for Leprosy Relief has similar words of caution.

She also urged people to be safe and be aware of the harmful effects of colours on skin and hair.

"The extreme exposure of the skin to these harmful chemicals may lead to skin irritation and even blindness if the colours get in contact with eyes," she warned.

She suggested people to wear full length cloth to escape from the demerits of harmful colours.

"People should take utmost precaution to protect their eyes and facial parts when they play Holy," suggested Pradhan, urging everyone to use natural products like henna, turmeric, dry rose petals among others.

She said that people should protect themselves from harsh chemical sprays, industrial dyes and the beating sun in the day of Holi.

Dr Mahesh Shah, a skin specialist, said skin disorders like discoloration, contract dermatitis, scratches, irritation, itching, and dryness are common consequences of colour used during the Holi.

Shah added that the harsh chemicals in Holi colours can cause itching and rashness which can lead to eczemas.

The malpractice of using glass powder with dirty water is much harmful to skin and eyes said Shah asking people to wash the chemical powders as soon as the colors were contacted with the skin.

Doctors' warning follows the growing unhealthy trend towards the use of lollas -plastic bags filled with dirty water-in splashing each others' faces and bodies during the Holi.

Also used are water pistols, buckets of water, water balloons and colours often not knowing the harmful consequences.

Meanwhile, the police arrested 90 persons for posing a threat to law and order on the eve of Holi.

## About the Author

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