

# TATTOO

## FACT SHEETS

### Tattoo Inks

In the past tattoo ink was usually confined to black and pi. such as red, green, and blue. Now, ink colors can be any combination of colors from white to various shades of black, brown, pink, violet, yellow and every shade in between. There are even glow in the dark and blacklight inks—although there are safety concerns about their use.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is in charge of regulating tattoo inks, but because there has been only a small amount of reported skin reactions the FDA has decided that it will not regulate or approve tattoo ink. This may change, however, since there is some evidence that certain dyes may cause skin irritation or allergic reactions. There were one hundred and fifty reports of harmful reactions reported to the FDA from 2003 to 2004. But this is actually relatively low when you consider that there are literally a million or more tattoos inked every year. Another problem with monitoring ink is that manufacturers of tattoo ink are not required to list the ingredients.

Tattoo pigments can be made from mineral substances or artificial solutions. Artificial solutions are more popular now because the colors are more intense. The pigment can be mixed with alcohol or water to produce the ink. Alcohol is a preferred solution because it helps to 'open up' the skin to allow the ink to be absorbed, and alcohol helps to disinfect the ink and skin.

If you are worried about the ink talk with your artist who can give you more information about the type of ink he or she uses.

HIGH RISK OF INFECTION

BLOOD, DIRT, SOOT  
PEN INKS  
DO NOT USE!

Another concern is getting a homemade tattoo that is made from unsterilized substances such as blood, dirt, soot, color pen ink, etc. This coupled with getting a tattoo in a non-commercial setting means that the risk of getting an infection is much higher.

