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PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Parents, Spring Breakers Encouraged to Know the Risks...

**Pinellas County Health Department
Urges Caution with Black Henna Tattoos**

In hopes of preventing further cases of adverse reactions to **black henna tattoos**, the Pinellas County Health Department urges residents and visitors to be aware of the risks involved with having these tattoos applied. Of particular local concern, the Pinellas County Health Department has received reports of allergic reactions and injuries to the skin from **black henna** tattoos popular with children, teens and those in our area on vacation who want to enjoy a "temporary" tattoo.

Henna, a coloring made from a plant, is approved only for use as a hair dye, not for direct application to the skin. Since henna typically produces a brown, orange-brown, or reddish-brown tint, other ingredients must be added to produce other colors, such as those marketed as black henna. This so-called black henna may contain the coal tar color p-phenylenediamine, also known as PPD. The only legal use of PPD in cosmetics is as a hair dye. It is not approved for direct application to the skin. This ingredient may cause mild to serious allergic reactions in some individuals who have a black henna tattoo applied to the skin.

Consumers are cautioned to be aware of the risks associated with henna tattoos in general, and black henna tattoos in particular. For more information or to report possible reactions to black henna tattoos, contact the Pinellas County Health Department's Environmental Health Division at (727) 507-4336.

For more information about black henna tattoos, visit www.fda.gov

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The mission of the Pinellas County Health Department is to promote, protect and improve the health and safety of residents and visitors through public and private community efforts.