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PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Health Department Urges Caution with Black Henna Tattoos

The Pinellas County Health Department urges residents and visitors to be aware of the risks involved with temporary black henna tattoos.

There have been reports of allergic reactions and injuries, including permanent scarring of the skin, from these tattoos that are popular with children, teens and vacationers who want to enjoy a “temporary” tattoo. So far, there have been no reports of tattoo-related injuries or allergic reactions in Pinellas County.

Henna, a coloring made from a plant, is approved for use as a hair dye only – 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.

So-called “black henna” may contain the coal tar p-phenylenediamine, also known as PPD. The only legal use of PPD in cosmetics is as a hair dye. According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), henna is not approved for direct application to the skin, and the unapproved use of the color additive makes this the product adulterated – and therefore illegal. This ingredient may cause mild to serious allergic reactions in some individuals who have a temporary “black henna” tattoo applied to the skin.

For more information or to report possible reactions to temporary black henna tattoos, contact the Pinellas County Health Department’s Environmental Health Division at 727-507-4336

**For more information about temporary tattoos and black henna visit
<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/cos-tatt.html>**

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The Mission of the Pinellas County Health Department is to promote, protect and improve the health and safety of our community through public and private partnerships in an environment that respects diversity.