

Editors handpick every product that we feature. We may earn money from the links on this page.

The Signs Your Makeup Has Expired

Like food, expired makeup can become a breeding ground for bacteria.

By [Hana Hong](#) Feb 20, 2020



At your own risk, take a gander into someone's makeup bag—you may discover a cringeworthy hoard of years-old makeup. Whether you bought something because you were too easily swayed by a salesperson at a beauty counter or you just have a makeup hoarding problem (like me), chances are you've been building a beauty graveyard of several foundation bottles or primer potions that you've only pumped once. Not to mention the eyeshadow palette that you've only used two shades out of, leaving the rest of the loner shades untouched. But why should you let it go? Well, beyond the blatant signs of expiration, like dried mascara and crumbling eyeshadow, it can be tough to tell when makeup has met its end.

In a perfect world, our favorite makeup products would last forever and save us so many trips to Sephora. But the truth is, regardless of whether they're brand new or on their last leg, beauty products *do* go bad. Even worse, they can cause skin and health problems if not disposed of at the proper time.

"Like food, makeup has an expiration date, and over time cosmetics can harbor harmful bacteria that can lead to infections," states Dr. David Schlessinger, a board-certified oculoplastic surgeon and ophthalmologist, and medical director of Schlessinger Eye & Face. **"The risks are multiplied when these products are shared among friends."** Here's exactly how to purge or preserve those products that've been collecting dust.

How to Know if Your Makeup Is Expired

Surprisingly, U.S. labeling regulations don't mandate an expiration date on most cosmetics, making it that much trickier to determine its lifespan. However, there are a few telltale signs that your makeup's gone bad. In general, the easiest way to tell if a product has properly served its time is by observing visual and olfactory changes. **If a product separates, changes color or texture, or smells off, odds are it's well past its expiration date.**

Beginning from the time you first open your products, this is the general rule of thumb you should be following:

- **Powders and shadows: 2 years**
- **Cream shadows: 12-18 months**
- **Foundation: 1 year**
- **Lipstick & lipliner: 1 year**
- **Mascara & eyeliners: 3 months**

How to Prolong Your Makeup's Shelf Life

1. Make sure that products are closed tight and away from sunlight.

This is the most elementary tip to preserving long-lasting products. Direct sunlight can accelerate the aging of a product, breaking down the active ingredients in your skincare.

2. Store products in cool temperatures.

Your fridge doesn't have to only store kombucha and midnight snacks. It can also house your favorite makeup and skincare products! **Cooler temperatures are known to extend shelf life, while hotter temperatures accelerate the degradation and lifespan of skincare products, especially those with any vitamin C or retinol.** Any serums, moisturizers, or oils can all be kept in the fridge. Even nail polish can be placed in cooler temps to avoid clumps and make for smoother application.

Shop the best skincare fridges

Skincare Beauty Fridge

Teami Blends

ulta.com

\$119.99

[shop it](#)



Mini Fridge Electric Cooler and Warmer

Cooluli

amazon.com

\$49.99

[shop it](#)



Portable Coral Beauty Fridge

FaceTory

amazon.com

\$89.00

shop it



Finishing Touch Flawless Beauty Mini Fridge

Flawless

amazon.com

\$59.99

shop it



3. Avoid the bathroom vanity.

Even though your bathroom may have the best lighting for your morning makeup routine, the trapped steam and humidity from the shower can generate mold. Anything with the lack of a strong seal such as compacts, eyeshadows, and sponge applicators, are strongly recommended to be moved somewhere drier in order to prevent bacteria buildup and mold growth.

4. Clean your tools regularly.

Clean your makeup brushes weekly using a mild detergent. Ideally, makeup sponges should be replaced weekly (yes weekly!), or when the sponge becomes stained.

Shop the best cleansing tools

Solid Clean: Solid Brush Cleaner Mini

Sephora Collection

[sephora.com](https://www.sephora.com)

\$8.00

[shop it](#)

Makeup Brush Cleansing Shampoo

EcoTools

[amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

\$4.79

[shop it](#)

blendercleanser[®] solid

beautyblender

sephora.com

\$16.00

[shop it](#)

Makeup Sanitizing Spray

Cinema Secrets

sephora.com

\$18.00

[shop it](#)

Now that you're equipped with knowledge, go forth and Marie Kondo your makeup collection.

For more stories like this, including celebrity news, beauty and fashion advice, savvy political commentary, and fascinating features, sign up for the Marie Claire newsletter.

[subscribe here](#)

RELATED STORY



These Makeup Trends Will Dominate the Year

HANA HONG

Hana Hong is the beauty assistant at Marie Claire, where she covers skincare, makeup, and haircare, and is identifiable by her signature cateye.

Watch Next

MORE FROM
MAKEUP

My Top 3 Favorite Lipsticks Right Now

16 Super Pretty Valentine's Day Makeup Tutorials

ADVERTISEMENT - CONTINUE READING BELOW

Editor-Approved: The Best No-Streak Self-Tanners

Pat McGrath's New Lipgloss Is Everything

The Eyeshadow Palettes Beauty Editors Swear By

This \$6 Lipstick Stole My Heart

This \$10 Lip Tint Feels Like Jelly on Your Lips

Hourglass' CEO Shares Her Morning Beauty Routine

These Makeup Trends Will Dominate the Year

These Are the 3 Lipsticks I'm Obsessed With RN

MAKEUP BEAUTY

GREAT THING OF THE DAY: HEAR 12-YEAR-OLD LORDE COVER KINGS OF LEON'S 'USE SOMEBODY'

MAKEUP BRUSHES 101: THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO WHAT'S WHAT VIRTUAL HAIRSTYLE AND MAKEUP MAKEOVER

10 MAKEUP TRICKS EVERY WOMAN NEEDS TO KNOW 14 THINGS WOMEN COULDN'T DO 94 YEARS AGO

THE 30 BEST BEAUTY LOOKS OF NYFW SPRING 2015



Newsletter

About Us

Press Room

Community Guidelines

Customer Service

Other Hearst Subscriptions

BestProducts

Giveaways

Digital Editions

Media Kit

Contact Us


Advertise Online

Subscribe

Give a Gift

Events & Promotions

Quizzes

 A Part of Hearst
Digital Media

A Part of Hearst Digital Media

Marie Claire participates in various affiliate marketing programs, which means we may get paid commissions on editorially chosen products purchased through our links to retailer sites.

©2020 Hearst Magazine Media, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

[Privacy Notice](#) [Your California Privacy Rights](#) [Interest-Based Ads](#) [Terms of Use](#) [Site Map](#)

[Do Not Sell My Info](#)