

6 Tips to Keep Makeup Germ-Free During Flu Season

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January and February can be typically dreary months, not only because the holidays are over and it's too chilly for bikinis, but because it's flu season in the Valley and the chances of catching it are all too common.

Everyone knows not to share beverages and to duck-and-cover when someone's coughing, but one of the greatest germ carriers of all is that innocent little makeup bag and all its contents sitting in your bathroom or purse.

That's why Melissa Lenberg, owner of [Citrine Natural Beauty Bar](#), a shop that sells more than 21 unique brands of natural, safe-on-skin products inside the Biltmore Fashion Park, is sharing her top tips to keeping makeup sanitary and bacteria-free.

1. **Clean makeup brushes immediately after use and deep-clean once per month.** – This is probably the biggest and most important thing not only during flu season or any other time of the year but also for the lifespan of the brushes. "I always give people this analogy, but it's like, if you didn't wash your hair for a month, what would your hair look like?" Lenberg suggests using the [Jane Iredale Botanical Brush Cleaner](#) sold at Citrine immediately after applying makeup and [Dr. Bronner's Pure-Castile Liquid Soaps](#) (all-organic) sold at drugstores, Whole Foods, or Target for weekly deep cleaning. Lenberg says the tea tree soap is really good for getting rid of bacteria.
2. **Hang makeup brushes over counter edge to air dry.** – Whenever you lay your brushes flat to dry, you want to make sure you hang them off the edge of the counter for even airflow throughout. If the brush is laying flat on the counter, one side will remain damp and wet and could harbor bacteria.
3. **Replace mascara every three months.** – Whether it's her own store's mascara or one from Walgreens, Lenberg recommends switching every three months. "It's just not worth a \$150 visit to the eye doctor because you get an eye infection."
4. **Do NOT pump mascara.** – Pumping mascara forces air into the tube, and the combination of air, darkness and wetness allows for germs and bacteria to form.
5. **Replace non-mineral-based makeup products after sickness.** – Most people probably don't know that natural, mineral-based makeups do not harbor bacteria (which is why people with acne-prone skin should make the switch!), whereas traditional brands do. Therefore, after sickness, it's probably safest to replace all products entirely, unless they're mineral based.
6. **Store makeup brushes out in the open where airflow exists.** – If Lenberg puts brushes in a case, it's usually just for travel. In that case, be sure to clean brushes with the spray mentioned above before putting them in and after taking them out. Otherwise, it's best to keep brushes in a cup on the counter where each one is receiving generous amounts of airflow.

