

# Debenhams Reveals The Make-Up Time Bomb In British Women's Cosmetic Bags

The logo consists of the word "DEBENHAMS" in a white, uppercase, sans-serif font, centered within a solid black rectangular background.

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Author: [Debenhams](#)

Industry: [Retail](#)

Debenhams has revealed that the average British woman's cosmetic bag is out of date by a worrying four years.

The new research highlighted that many British women are using cosmetics well past the use-by date, unaware that products can be a magnet for germs which could cause damage to their health and looks.

Sara Stern, Director of Cosmetics at Debenhams said, "British women are famously loyal to make up brands and products, however, their reluctance to throw away old products is a risky business."

Beauty essentials such as foundation, concealer, blusher, eyeshadow, eyeliner, mascara, lipstick and perfume all include a 'period after opening' indicator, denoted by an open pot with the number of months of safe use written inside.

Despite European Union guidelines meaning brands have to state product shelf lives, 89% of women are unaware that such information exists, do not understand what the symbol means or are unable to read the often tiny writing. Make-up, perfume and skincare products used after the expiry date carry a risk of irritation and infection. This is due to air and bacteria infiltrating the products. Multiuse products carry an even higher risk as they can spread germs from eyes to skin to lips.

The study also found that 68% of women only replace make-up and skincare when they run out, however long that might take. 72% of women never wash their make-up sponges or brushes, even though they should do at least once a week. 81% of British women also regularly (at least once a week) go to sleep without removing make up.

Bevis Man of the British Skin Foundation said: "It's not always obvious when make-up has passed its prime, so it may not occur to people to replace their products. It is best to err on the side of caution and if a product looks or smells strange, it is worth throwing it away.

"Cost is probably a major factor in why people do not replace out-of-date cosmetics. However, products can dry out and become less effective as they age.

"Your eyes are one area of your face you need to be particularly careful with, as eye infections can be painful and long-lasting. Make-up sponges are a particular haven for bacteria, especially if they are kept for a long period of time and are not washed. Again, it is best to keep them clean and replace them after a few months' use."

As a result of the findings, Debenhams is exploring ways in which the 'best before' date of products can be better communicated to customers. Staff members are being trained to point out the importance of regularly replacing products and a 'make up' amnesty is planned nationwide. Debenhams has also written to the Secretary of State for Health to push for further legislation to cover the safety of consumers.

Sara Stern concluded, "Hopefully this call to action will encourage women to have a ruthless spring clean of their cosmetics collections. All our Beauty Hall staff members are on hand to advise customers of the use-by dates of their current items and help replenish any empty cosmetic bags".

- Ends -

Notes to Editors:  
\* Debenhams quizzed 1,000 women aged 18-70 years on the contents of their cosmetic bags and their understanding of the health considerations.

**About**

Debenhams is a leading department stores group, and has a strong presence in key product categories including women's wear and dresses, men's wear, home wares, make-up including the [benefit makeup](#) range, health and [beauty](#), accessories, [perfume](#) including [chanel](#) and [estee lauder](#), lingerie and children's wear.

Debenhams has 139 stores including seven Desire by Debenhams stores, across the UK and Ireland with approximately 10.1 million square feet of trading space and employing around 21,500 employees.

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