

Holi is coming. Play it safely

Continuing the tradition of smearing colour on the faces of friends and throwing coloured water in a playful manner on guests is a hallmark of the Indian Festival **Holi**.

Historically, Holi, the festival of bright and cheerful colours, used to be played with natural dyes made from henna leaves, margosa leaves, marigold flowers, turmeric, kumkum and Gulal made from red sandalwood powder etc. With changing times, chemical dyes and synthetic colours entered into the market. These may contain dangerous toxins that have harmful effect on the human body. Therefore, one has to be careful while using the colours for playing holi; most of the modern colours are in fact chemical dyes and can cause skin allergies. Some of the skin problems that could occur are itching, rashes, dryness and irritation. Eyes are extremely vulnerable and need to be protected since sometimes; these harmful colours come in contact with eyes resulting in eye-infection etc.

Why don't we all start using herbal colours made up of natural substances? We should spread the message of not using chemical colours having harmful substances such as lead and mercury etc. This is the first step of risk avoidance to have a vibrant and safe holi.

One more aspect of danger is that the floor becomes slippery due to playing with water colours. So while playing holi, avoid running or jumping on wet floors as one may get injured due to slippery floors spoiling the mood of the day.

The second step is minimise risk by applying oil on the skin and hair before playing holi. This way, the dyes will not catch hold on to the body easily. Using oil may help to minimise the side effects, even if some of the colours used by friends happen to be chemical colours.

And finally, one should never force any one to play holi against their will.

Remember, it is all about taking a little care and exercising due caution even while enjoying the **Holi** with your near and dear ones.