

Mascara Running

The only real dangers of makeup are when you accidentally stab yourself in the eye with your mascara brush.

Or accidentally inhale powder.

Or when it runs into your eyes.

That's really all of the damage makeup can do, right?

The truth is, there are more dangers.

More than you'll ever see on a package or in an article.

Makeup can become an addiction.

Once you start using it, it can be impossible to stop.

I started using it in fifth grade when I decided to buy an eyeshadow palette from Claire's.

This dingy little palette wasn't much, just a few basic colors.

But it made me feel grown up.

It made me feel pretty.

I didn't see the harm in a little eyeshadow, and in my head, I felt so cool.

I would walk into school with fallout covering my eyelashes and the area under my eyes.

It would look like blocks of different colors unevenly blended on my eyelid.

But I didn't care because I was wearing makeup just like my sisters and their friends.

Fast forward a year, and I discovered the power of mascara.

Before putting it on, I would look in the mirror and see tiredness.

If I forgot to cack it on some mornings, I would be self-conscious and cover my face at school.

It became a necessity.

In seventh grade, I began to use eyeliner.

I woke up an hour earlier each day to try to learn how to do it.

If I didn't finish putting it on before school, too bad, I would be late that day.

At one point, I couldn't even picture myself without it.

But when I realized how bad these little uneven lines around my eyes truly looked,

I noticed that I had chosen to ignore it.

At first, I looked back and remembered trying my best to make sure it was good enough.

I wouldn't have wanted to change my whole routine either.

But then I remembered how stressed I would be if I overslept and didn't have time.

I would begin to shake or panic or have an anxiety attack just because of the thought that I would have to show my real face at school.

I would cry because of the stress and need to redo it again.

But really, what was the big deal?

The big deal was that I had been training for many years to hate what I looked like without makeup.

Each year, I moved on to a new product and whenever I got used to it, changed it to make sure people would focus on that and not on my actual face.

No matter how awful it was, at least no one would have to look at me.

At least I wouldn't have to look at me.

I wondered how I could stop the addiction. How I could learn to love myself.

But I never tried to figure it out because then, I probably would have started crying.

My mascara would have ran into my eyes and it would have stung.

That's really the only damage makeup can do, right?

“Mascara Running” by Alyssa Jaster – Avery Coonley, Glen Ellyn