

Sign of the Kiss Allergic Dermatitis From Black Henna and From Adhesive Tape

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PRECÍS

The “sign of the kiss” has been recently reported for the first time due to contact allergens.¹ We herein report 4 additional cases that highlight this underreported condition.

DISCUSSION

A 15-year-old adolescent girl presented with acute eczema developing within 1 week after application of black henna tattoo on the volar forearm and on the thenar area of the palm, using henna stone powder to obtain black henna paste as previously described.² Involvement of the juxtaposed areas on the cheek was striking (Fig. 1). She admitted that she occasionally propped up the cheek with the palm. Patch testing was performed with European baseline series (Chemotechnique Diagnostics, Vellinge, Sweden). Readings performed on days 2, 3, 4, and 7, according to International Contact Dermatitis Research Group criteria, showed +++ positive reaction to *p*-phenylenediamine (1% in petrolatum).

Our second case is a 42-year-old man who presented with acute eczema at the site of a black henna tattoo on the volar forearm as well as on the juxtaposed areas of the face, that is, on the ipsilateral upper eyelid and ala nasi (Fig. 2A). Case 3 is a 26-year-old man, showed kissing lesions on the upper arm juxtaposed to the acute eczematous lesion at the site of black henna tattoo on the volar forearm (Fig. 2B). A symmetry line going through the center of the antecubital fossa was imaginable (Fig. 2B). Patch testing could not be performed on these patients.

Case 4 is a 47-year-old man, presented with contact eczematous reaction at the site of adhesive tape that was applied to a surgical

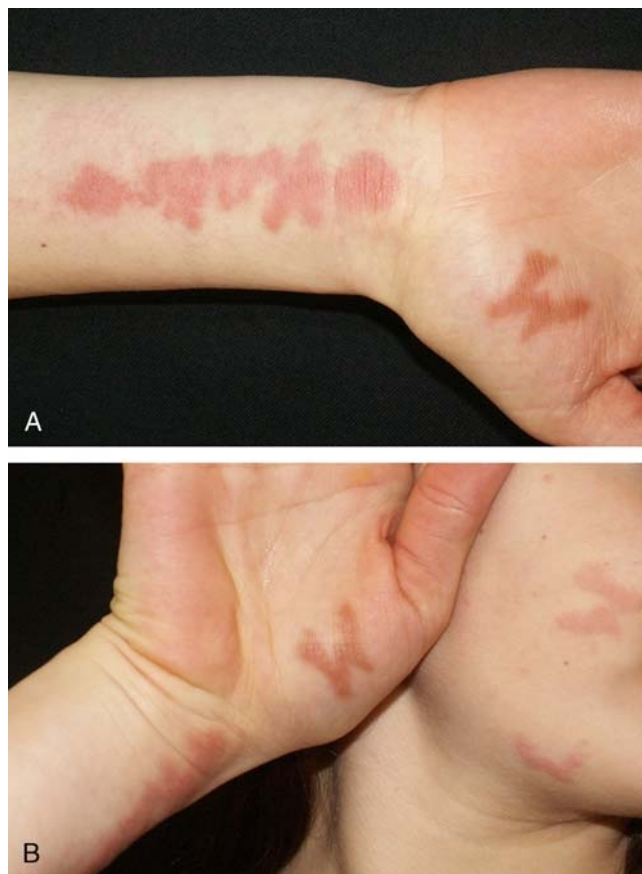


Figure 1. A, Contact eczematous reaction at the sites of black henna tattoo on the thenar area of the right hand and the right volar forearm. B, Sign of the kiss on 2 areas of the right cheek.

incision on the volar surface of the forearm next to the antecubital fossae (Fig. 2C). Sign of the kiss was noticeable on the upper arm. A symmetry line going through the center of the antecubital fossa was imaginable in this case as well (Fig. 2C). He had a history of contact eczematous reaction after the use of adhesive tapes to wounded areas in the past. However, concomitantly used topical antiseptics or antibiotics might have caused the reaction as well. Unfortunately, the culprit agent could not be identified because the patient died unexpectedly because of an acute myocardial infarction.

In all patients, the involvement of skin areas juxtaposed to the primary eczematous lesion was a striking finding.

The sign of the kiss or “kissing lesions” on the skin or mucosa are defined as secondary involvement of adjacent, touching areas in contact with the primary lesion. It has been described in various infectious, for example, primary syphilis, herpes genitalis, candidiasis, or noninfectious diseases, for example, from spread of pederin in *Paederus* dermatitis³ and very recently

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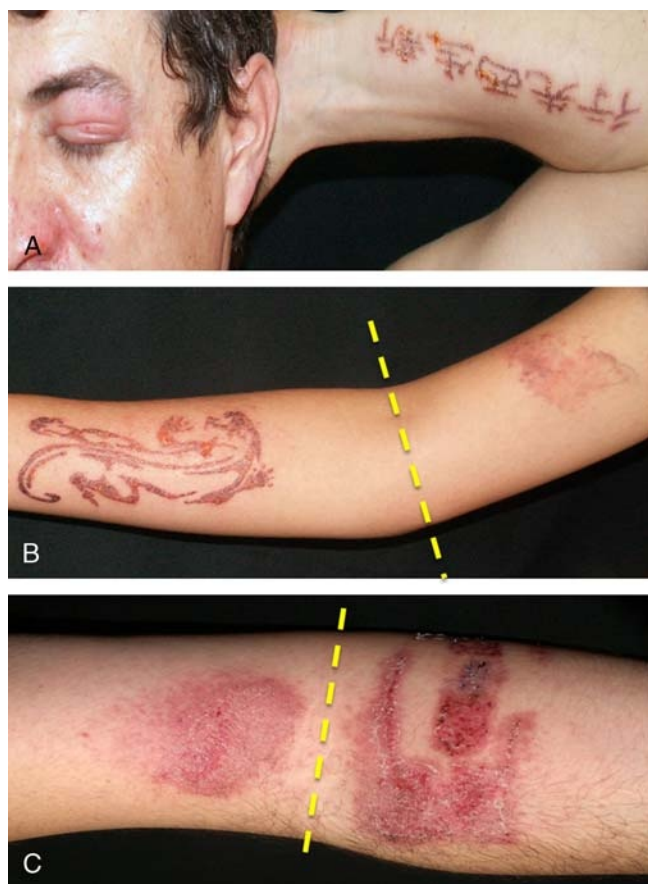


Figure 2. A, Contact eczematous reaction at the site of black henna tattoo on the left volar forearm and sign of the kiss on the left upper eyelid and ala nasi. B, Contact eczematous reaction at the site of black henna tattoo on the right volar forearm and sign of the kiss on the right upper arm. C, Contact eczematous reaction at the site of adhesive tape on the left volar forearm and sign of the kiss on the left upper arm. B and C, Note the imaginary symmetry line (yellow dotted line) going through the center of the antecubital fossa.

from spreading of a contact allergen in a patient from black henna tattoo.¹ The concentration of the potent sensitizer *p*-phenylenediamine in black henna preparations is extremely high, including those obtained from henna stone,⁴ leading to high rates of sensitization and severe contact reactions. Moreover, the volar forearm, one of the most preferred areas for black henna tattoos, is apparently more prone to come into contact with the opposed skin of the upper volar part of the same arm, imagining the antecubital fossa to serve for mirror symmetry.⁵ Trunk and face, mainly the ipsilateral parts, were other important juxtaposed areas, probably during sleep or from propping up the face with hand or forearm throughout the day.

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The sign of the kiss or kissing lesions might be an important but underreported phenomenon in allergic contact dermatitis, especially from black henna tattoos.

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