

eyeshadow primer

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Eyeshadow Primer

A base applied to the eyelid before shadow. Unlike [Face Primer](#), which is frequently optional, eyelid primer solves a specific mechanical problem that nothing else in a routine addresses — and on an oily lid it is the difference between shadow lasting eight hours and two.

The problem it solves

The eyelid is the most hostile surface makeup is asked to stay on:

- **It has sebaceous glands** and produces oil continuously.
- **It folds and unfolds thousands of times a day.** Every blink drags the crease across itself.
- **It is warm**, sitting over a vascular bed, which softens waxes and binders.
- **It moves constantly**, and it is watered from above by the tear film.

The result is **creasing** — powder migrating into the crease line and collecting there — and **fading**, where oil dissolves the binder and lifts the pigment.

How a primer works

It creates a dry, slightly tacky, oil-resistant surface that shadow grips and sebum cannot easily reach:

Class	Doing what	Names
Film former	The barrier layer	Acrylates copolymer, PVP, trimethylsiloxysilicate
Absorbent	Takes up sebum arriving from below	Silica, nylon-12, starch, kaolin
Silicone	Smooths and grips	Dimethicone, cyclopentasiloxane
Pigment	Neutralises lid discoloration; intensifies shadow	Titanium dioxide, iron oxides

Tinted versus transparent matters more than people expect. A skin-tone or slightly opaque primer neutralises the pink, blue or brown discoloration most lids carry, so shadow reads as its own colour rather than mixing with the lid. A white or pale primer makes colours read brighter, which is why it appears under bold shadow.

Using it

- **A very small amount, blended thin.** Too much primer creases on its own, which is the failure mode people blame on the shadow.
- **Let it set** for thirty seconds before applying shadow — this is the step most often skipped.
- **A concealer is not a primer.** It is emollient, it stays soft, and it creases; it neutralises colour but works against longevity.
- **On mature or hooded lids**, a matte primer plus a matte shadow through the crease reduces the migration that a satin finish exaggerates.

The alternatives that work

A dusting of translucent [Setting Powder](#) on a bare lid does much of the same job and costs nothing extra. Cream shadows with strong film formers can act as their own base. Neither matches a dedicated primer on a genuinely oily lid.

Where it sits in the rules

Cosmetic — FDA primary category **(03) eye makeup preparations**, which brings the full eye-area rule set:

- **Only colour additives approved for eye-area use** may be present, and certified colours must come from **FDA-certified batches**.
- The **mercury carve-out** applies — mercury compounds are prohibited except as a preservative in eye-area products at no more than 65 ppm where nothing else works.
- Under MoCRA the **small-business exemption from registration and listing does not apply** to products that regularly contact the eye's mucous membrane.

Shelf life

Twelve months after opening, and less in practice for the dominant format — a wand in a tube, which returns to the product after touching the lid every use. Squeeze tubes are more hygienic and rarer.

The overriding rule for everything in this section: **stop at the first sign of eye irritation or infection and**

throw the product away. Do not share it, and treat store testers as contaminated.

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- Regulatory statements here follow the FDA and EU sources listed on [Cosmetics](#), read 16 August 2026.