

KISSING SCENE HEALTH & SAFETY GUIDELINES: Film and Television Productions

These guidelines are designed to promote clear communication, informed consent, and safe hygiene practices for performers involved in scenes that include kissing or mouth-to-mouth contact.

Hygiene and Illness Prevention

Kissing can transmit communicable illnesses. Following good oral hygiene practices may lower the risk and support the health of everyone on set.

Brushing Teeth: Allow at least 30 minutes to 1 hour between brushing your teeth and filming a kissing scene. Because brushing can cause gums to bleed or create micro-abrasions, the risk of blood-borne transmission is higher immediately afterward. Allowing this time for the tissue to settle reduces irritation and the likelihood of open micro-bleeds during kissing, and may help reduce the risk of transmitting blood-borne infections.

Illness: Refrain from participating in kissing scenes if you are feeling unwell. Consider self-testing for COVID-19 or influenza if you are experiencing symptoms or have had recent exposure.

Mouthwash: Use an alcohol- or peroxide-based mouthwash prior to filming and approximately every 20 minutes during extended kissing scenes or rehearsals. This practice helps reduce oral bacterial buildup, which can occur quickly during repeated close contact.

Allergies: If you have a food allergy that could pose a risk (for example, if your scene partner consumes an allergen), notify production in advance and suggest a mitigation plan, such as avoiding specific foods prior to the scene.

Cold Sores and Oral Health

Cold sores are extremely common, affecting roughly 50%-80% of adults. There is no reason to feel embarrassed if you are prone to outbreaks, but taking preventive measures is important, especially in a production setting. Consulting a medical professional about preventative treatments, such as valacyclovir (*Valtrex*), is strongly recommended. Stress can often trigger flare-ups, and busy production schedules may increase this risk. If you experience tingling, burning, or notice visible sores, all lip contact should stop immediately, and the Intimacy Coordinator or production team should be informed discreetly for guidance.

Communication and Support

Open communication ensures a safe and professional environment for everyone. If you have concerns, allergies, or health conditions that could affect a kissing scene, please manage your care privately but responsibly. Notify production when necessary to maintain safety for all participants.

Placeholders

These gestures can stand in for a kiss during rehearsals.

- Exchange a quick high five or light hand tap
- Press palms together
- Touch noses
- Tap nose to body part being kissed
- Rest forehead to forehead or cheek to cheek
- Add a playful “mwah” or snapping sound

Open Mouth Kissing

This term refers to any kiss performed with parted lips and may, but does not necessarily, include tongue contact.

Performers should verbally confirm mutual consent before any open-mouth or tongue contact.

Any changes to the level of physical intimacy discussed in rehearsal must be re-confirmed before shooting.

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