

## “I can't wear gold... it leaves a black mark”

JAA jewellers often hear this complaint. They call it ‘the mystery of the gold smudge.’ Under normal conditions gold won't tarnish or corrode, but there are generations of stories about ‘not being able to wear gold.’ Research into the ‘gold smudge’ has revealed five basic reasons why gold can sometimes leave a black mark or a rash.

1. Sometimes skin secretion and perspiration contain chemicals which react with the molecules of other metals in the gold alloy. This can happen when changes occur in body chemistry, for example during pregnancy.
2. Outside chemical influences, such as cosmetics, hairsprays and perfumes may sometimes be to blame for the ‘smudge’ – always allow these products to dry before putting on your jewellery.
3. Air pollutants from industry may cause the ‘smudge’ which can rub off onto the skin when jewellery is worn.
4. Minute particles of dust or powder may be embedded in the skin which can result in extremely small particles of gold alloy being rubbed off and left on the skin.
5. The fifth and least likely cause may be allergy to gold or one of the other metals in the alloy, such as an allergy to nickel which is commonly used in fashion jewellery and in some white golds.

### Why you should buy your gold from a JAA jeweller

- ◆ Knowledge of the gold industry and the nature of gold requires years of extensive study. Therefore, it is absolutely vital that you purchase your gold jewellery from a reputable jeweller, one that you can trust.
- ◆ Established jewellers prize their good reputation.
- ◆ It is important to know the company you are dealing with. Ask questions. Be confident of returning for advice and service in the future.
- ◆ A JAA jeweller can explain about the characteristics of gold and how to care for it properly.
- ◆ You can be assured of professional service and specialist, honest advice.

SHOP WITH CONFIDENCE  
WHERE YOU SEE THIS SIGN



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With compliments from your JAA jeweller

This brochure has been prepared by the Jewellers Association of Australia (JAA) with the assistance of Jewellers of America, and A.A.Kennedy Pty Ltd.

Your JAA jeweller is pleased to make this brochure available to you as a service and will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

What you should know  
about buying

# Gold Jewellery



J A A

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*Jewellery is special. It can last a lifetime. It can be an emotional and sentimental experience that evokes wonderful memories while still giving pleasure for years ahead. When buying for yourself or for others, it helps to have an understanding of the qualities and characteristics of jewellery, which is why the Jewellers Association of Australia (JAA) has produced this brochure.*

*If you need more information or advice, talk to a JAA Jeweller – look for our logo in the store window.*

## The allure of gold

From the beginning of time, gold has been one of the most valued and sought-after of the precious metals. At various times it has been accorded magical and mystical properties, has been fought over, prized as a form of international exchange, had the badge of royalty, and has lured people of all cultures to vast unknown lands in search of it. Always, a gift of gold has been the symbol of lasting love and devotion.

Over centuries of increasing sophistication and technology, gold has assumed many additional roles. Not only is it still prized as an essential component of jewellery, it also has many applications in contemporary modern day life.

For example, gold has soared into space with the astronauts where its reflective ability has been used on the heat shields that are critical to life beyond earth's atmosphere. This same reflective ability increases the aesthetic and practical beauty of modern skyscrapers as the gold in tinted windows makes the difference between obstructive glare and glamorous gleam.

It has many other specific applications, including uses in telephones and telecommunications, television sets, computers and calculators. It also has important applications in medicine and dentistry.

But above all, gold is most renowned in its ultimate form – jewellery. Every day men, women and children continue the centuries-old ritual of gold adornment. They are caught up in gold's allure through the acquisition and purchase of any number of pieces of gold jewellery, whether it be a ring, chain, necklace, earrings, bracelet or watch.

## The uniqueness of gold

Of all the world's precious metals, only gold combines the four basic characteristics that make it a universally and eternally treasured possession – lustrous beauty, rarity, durability and workability.

**Lustrous beauty:** The naturally intense colour and distinctive lustre of gold combine to give this precious metal its unique and lasting beauty. This beauty is further enhanced by the soft and exquisite shades of colour achieved by combining it with small amounts of other precious and base metals known as alloy.

The many colours of gold include yellow, white, pink and green and, to a lesser extent, shades of blue and purple. All are beautiful in their own right, and in combination.

**Rarity:** Although gold is everywhere around us – in the earth's crust, in the seas, rivers and plants – the difficulty and expense of obtaining it makes recovery of any substantial amounts unlikely. Where gold is found to exist, as it does in several regions of Australia, several tonnes of ore may be required to extract just one ounce of gold.

This rarity alone is enough to bestow a certain symbolism and status to gold, and when combined with its other inherent characteristics, it becomes an even more desirable possession.

**Durability:** Gold virtually lasts forever. It does not rust, tarnish or corrode. An example of its incredible durability is evidenced in the gold coins found in galleons sunk centuries ago. Each coin is as bright and shiny as the day it was made.

Another familiar example which has overwhelmed millions of people are the treasures of King Tut. When the boy King Tutankhamen died in 1350BC he was buried with vast amounts of gold artefacts and jewellery.

Today, more than 3000 years later, people marvel at the breathtaking array of items as gleaming and lustrous as when they were buried.

**Workability:** Gold has the best working qualities of any metal, thereby making it the ideal precious metal for fine jewellery. It is so soft and malleable that one ounce can be stretched into a wire an incredible 80 kilometres long, or hammered into a sheet so thin that it covers well over nine square metres and becomes transparent.

It is this workability that enables it to be alloyed with other precious and base metals to produce special qualities or to achieve variations of colour.

Gold can be remelted and used again and again and it can be made into a vast array of jewellery items. From the most intricate baby bracelet to the heaviest chain, gold's workability gives it the ability to exist in a multitude of forms and shapes.

## How do you know it is real gold?

When purchasing an item of gold jewellery, always look for a carat mark which should be stamped on it. This is a quality mark and refers to the proportion of pure gold in the item. Pure gold, which is 24ct, the metric equivalent being 1000, is generally considered too soft for practical uses in jewellery and is alloyed with other precious and base metals to increase its durability. Some of the common markings found on jewellery, with their metric equivalents, are:

22ct or 916

18ct or 750

14ct or 585

9ct or 375

Some other precious metal markings on jewellery are:

Silver – sterling or 925

Platinum – Plat, Pt or 950

Palladium – Pal, PD or 900

Markings on jewellery items are not limited to the carat or quality mark, You may find a manufacturer's trade mark, logo or initials on some jewellery, particularly items made in the United Kingdom where a comprehensive hallmarking system is in place.

If you need further information about any marking that appear on a piece of fine jewellery, ask your JAA Jeweller for some assistance.

## Care of gold jewellery

Like all jewellery, gold should be periodically cleaned and checked for wear and breakages. You can clean it yourself with warm, soapy water, but your JAA Jeweller can repolish it and add that extra sparkle.

Also, store your jewellery so that items don't scratch or scuff each other. Perhaps use a jewellery box, with separate compartments, stored in a secure place.