

Medical Provider Health Alert

Fatality from Lead Poisoning Linked to Use of Hemorrhoid Ointment from Vietnam

In March 2024, a woman in Sacramento developed severe lead poisoning and died after using a hemorrhoid ointment from Vietnam called, **Cao Bôi Trị Cây Thầu Dầu**. The woman purchased the product on Facebook and a relative in Vietnam shipped it to the U.S. Testing of the product found that it contained four percent lead (39,000 ppm), which is a highly dangerous amount.



If your patients have used this hemorrhoid ointment, urge them to:

- Stop using the ointment immediately.
- Place the jar of ointment in a closed sealable bag.
- Contact the California Department of Public Health at (510) 620-3620 or email toxoutbreak@cdph.ca.gov.

Patients who used this ointment should receive a venous blood lead test immediately. Their household members should also receive a blood lead test since they may have had contact with the ointment. Lead poisoning symptoms can be non-specific but may include those in the table below. While some individuals can be asymptomatic, others can experience symptoms.

Symptoms Associated with Lead Toxicity

Mild	Moderate	Severe
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fatigue or exhaustion • Irritability or emotional lability • Difficulty concentrating • Difficulty sleeping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headache • Myalgia, arthralgia, tremor • Nausea, decreased appetite • Abdominal cramps, constipation or diarrhea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colic (intermittent, severe abdominal cramps) • Peripheral neuropathy (often in the hands) • Encephalopathy • Coma • Death

Contact California Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222 for clinical guidance on lead poisoning. See [Health-Based Guidelines for BLL in Adults](#) for specific recommendations based on your patient’s BLL results.

Visit our webpage for additional information on this alert: go.cdph.ca.gov/Alert-Lead-April-2024

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