



News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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CDPH Warns Consumers Not to Use Certain Skin-Lightening Creams Due to Possible Health Risk

SACRAMENTO -- Dr. Ron Chapman, director of the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and state health officer, today warned people not to use specific brands of imported skin-lightening creams that have tested positive for high levels of mercury. Mercury is a toxic chemical, and regular or prolonged exposure can result in mercury poisoning. There have been no illnesses associated with these products; however, similar skin-lightening creams have previously been implicated in illnesses nationwide.



The most recent products tested were available for purchase in various markets or on-line, and were labeled in foreign languages, sometimes without listing their ingredients. [Product photographs are available on the CDPH website.](#)

Consumers should discontinue use of these products, as well as any face-cream product that lists mercury, mercurio, mercurous chloride, cinnabar, or calomel in the ingredients, or is otherwise packaged without any labeling.

Symptoms of mercury poisoning include irritability, depression; nervousness, difficulty concentrating or remembering; fatigue; tremors, shaking or weakness; tingling or numbness in hands, feet or around the mouth.

If you have any of these symptoms and think they may be the result of using an imported skin-lightening cream, see your health care provider. You can get additional information from the California Poison Control System at 1-800-222-1222, or the California Safe Cosmetics Program hotline at 1-877-325-3223. Information is also available on CDPH's [Mercury in Skin Creams Web page.](#)

Consumers that observe these products being offered for sale are encouraged to call CDPH's toll-free complaint line at (800) 495-3232.

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