



HEALTH ALERT

UNAPPROVED USE OF IVERMECTIN TO PREVENT OR TREAT COVID-19



The California Department of Public Health's Food and Drug Branch is warning consumers about the dangers of using ivermectin to treat COVID-19. Ivermectin is a medication used to treat parasites in animals and to treat worms, head lice, and rosacea in humans. Ivermectin has not been approved by the FDA to treat COVID-19.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an increase in reports of ivermectin toxicity. Poison control centers have recently seen a dramatic increase in the number of calls related to ivermectin exposures¹, and there have been several reports of adverse events associated with ivermectin use².

Safety concerns with the use of ivermectin:

Animal ivermectin products can contain highly concentrated levels of ivermectin that may lead to overdose in humans and may contain other ingredients not tested for human use. Symptoms of ivermectin toxicity include^{1,3}.

- Gastrointestinal upset such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
- Allergic reactions such as itching or hives
- Low blood pressure
- Neurological effects such as confusion, dizziness, hallucinations, seizures, coma, or death



Soumyabrata Roy/NurPhoto/Getty Images

In accordance with FDA and CDC guidance^{1,3}, CDPH recommends that consumers not take any form of ivermectin without a prescription from your doctor.

Individuals should seek immediate medical attention if you have taken ivermectin and are experiencing symptoms of toxicity. You may also call the poison control central hotline at 1-800-222-1222 for advice.



Denis Farrell/AP

CDPH also recommends that healthcare providers:

- Warn patients about the risks associated with unapproved ivermectin use
- Tell patients not to use veterinary ivermectin products
- Consider posting a safety alert in medical office buildings or exam rooms, such as the one found here: <https://www.fda.gov/media/151853/download>

References:

¹U.S. Food and Drug Administration. 2021. [Why You Should Not Use Ivermectin to Treat or Prevent COVID-19](#).

²American College of Medical Toxicity. 2021.
[https://www.acmt.net/ Library/Press Releases/ACMT Press Release Ivermectin.pdf](https://www.acmt.net/Library/Press_Releases/ACMT_Press_Release_Ivermectin.pdf)

³U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2021. [Rapid Increase in Ivermectin Prescriptions and Reports of Severe Illness Associated with Use of Products Containing Ivermectin to Prevent or Treat COVID-19](#)

Anyone with questions about this health alert should contact the State of California's Food and Drug Branch at (800) 495-3232 or FDBinfo@cdph.ca.gov.

www.cdph.ca.gov