

Mercury Poisoning Linked to Certain Face Creams

Recently, certain face creams, either homemade or imported from Mexico, have been found to contain unsafe, high levels of mercury. The creams claim to lighten skin, fade freckles and age spots, and treat wrinkles and acne. Anyone who suspects they may have used these products is urged to stop using the product immediately.

About mercury poisoning

Mercury poisoning symptoms from extended or prolonged use of these creams can include muscle pain and cramps, nervousness and irritability, difficulty with concentration, headache, tremors, memory loss, depression, insomnia, weight loss, and fatigue. Some people may also experience numbness or tingling in hands, feet, or around the lips.

Creams that contain mercury can be dangerous for anyone living in the home where they are used. Mercury can spread by touching objects. It can enter the air after the cream has been applied and while the container is open. Pregnant women, infants, and children are especially sensitive to the effects of mercury.

How to protect yourself

Check the ingredients label on any skin creams, especially those labeled *skin lightening*, *anti-aging*, or *anti-acne*. Stay away from products containing:

- Mercurous chloride
- Calomel
- Mercuric
- Mercurio
- Mercury

If there is no label, the ingredients are not listed, or you are unable to read the label, do not use the product. Only buy and use products from a reputable retailer.

Discard safely

Products that may contain mercury cannot be thrown into the trash. Instead, double-bag the product and call the Environmental Health Call Center at (888) 700-9995 to arrange transport of the bagged product.

***If you believe your product contains mercury, stop using it immediately.
Contact the Poison Control Center at (800) 222-1222.***



Face creams containing mercury

(Images courtesy of Orange County Health Care Agency)