



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: Cheri Gyuro
(916) 574-7381

BOARD OF BARBERING AND COSMETOLOGY ISSUES WARNING ABOUT MERCURY-TAINTED FACE CREAMS

Consumers urged to verify products are from U.S. distributors

SACRAMENTO – The California Board of Barbering and Cosmetology (BBC) wants consumers to be aware that certain face cream products from Mexico could be tainted with the toxic liquid metal mercury and to take the proper precautions to avoid poisoning. The potentially hazardous products can be purchased on the streets, in ethnic beauty stores, ethnic supermarkets, swap meets, or online.

BBC issued the warning after a Sacramento woman fell into a coma from using Pond's Rejuveness anti-wrinkle and spot removal cream that was laced with a skin-lightening compound that contained methylmercury. The product was tampered with after it had been manufactured and sold in Mexico.

"Consumers and BBC licensees should be aware of what they are purchasing and using," said BBC Executive Officer Kristy Underwood. "It's important for them to confirm that products have been approved by the FDA and come from an authorized distributor in the United States," Underwood said.

Some face creams can be tampered with, but others intentionally contain mercury as an active ingredient.

Toxic effects from mercury poisoning target the central nervous system and kidneys. Mercury can spread from the hands of anyone using the cream to other things they touch. It can also get into the air and anyone can breathe it in. Exposure can cause loss of

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peripheral vision, muscle weakness, tremors, headaches, insomnia, mood swings, and impairment of speech, hearing and walking.

For more information about mercury poisoning and to find examples of tainted face creams visit the [California Department of Public Health's health alert page](#).

ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS: *The Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) promotes and protects the interests of California consumers while ensuring a competent and fair marketplace. DCA helps consumers learn how to protect themselves from unscrupulous and unqualified individuals. The department also protects professionals (licensees) from unfair competition by unlicensed practitioners. Consumers can file complaints against licensees by contacting DCA at (800) 952-5210. Consumers can also file a complaint online at dca.ca.gov.*

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