

“Aguamary” Skin Cream and Skin-Lightening Creams Can Cause Health Problems

Maryland consumers are warned that certain face creams, including “Crema Aguamary,” can contain high levels of mercury. These skin creams can cause serious health problems, and consumers are urged not to use them.

Background

In November 2011 the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) was contacted about a skin cream sold in Mexico as “Crema Aguamary.” The skin cream was tested and was found to have very high levels of mercury. The mercury in the cream was much more than allowed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Skin lightening products (also called skin brightening or fade products) are used to lighten skin tone, fade freckles, or get rid of age spots.

Use of these skin creams can cause serious health problems including problems with the nervous system, kidneys, skin, blood pressure, and digestive tract. Unborn babies, infants, and children are especially sensitive to the effects of mercury and lead.

Where are these products found?

These products have in some cases been bought outside of the United States and brought into the country. Stores in Maryland should not be selling these products.

How do I know if a product has mercury in it?

- If the label says the product contains “mercury,” “mercurio,” “mercuric,” “mercurous,” or “calomel,” stop using the product.
- If the label does not list the ingredients, stop using it. Federal law requires that the ingredients be listed on the label.

What should I do if I have been using this product?

- Contact your doctor if you have concerns that you may have been exposed to mercury from this product.
- Wash all product from your skin with soap and water.
- If you have product that you believe contains mercury, seal it in a plastic bag or leak-proof container and place it in your household trash. DHMH is not testing any product for mercury at this time.

For more information

For more information contact the Maryland Poison Center toll-free at 1-800-222-1222; your local health department; or the DHMH Center for Environmental Health and Community Services toll-free at 1-866-703-3266.



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