

Mercury in Skin Creams from Mexico Can Make You or Your Child Sick

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Many people in California, including children and babies, have been poisoned by skin-lightening or acne creams made in Mexico, containing high levels of mercury. One young child was hospitalized for weeks because her mother used a cream. A teenager, who used a cream for acne, was hospitalized for almost a month. These creams came in jars that either did not have a label, or had a hand-made label. These creams were used to:

- Lighten or whiten skin
- Fade age spots, freckles, and blemishes
- Get rid of acne

Children can get mercury in their bodies when they are touched by family members who use the creams. The users of these creams may also spread mercury throughout the home on clothes, furniture, and other items. **If you have a jar of unlabeled or hand-labeled skin cream from Mexico, stop using it immediately.**

Common symptoms of mercury poisoning

- Headaches, memory loss, or difficulty concentrating
- Irritability, nervousness, fatigue, or insomnia
- Tremors (shaking) or twitching
- Tingling or numbness in hands, feet, or around the lips
- Weakness or loss of strength in arm and leg muscles

If you or your children have any of these symptoms and you are using a skin-lightening or acne cream from Mexico, go to your doctor or health clinic. For free medical advice, call **Poison Control** at 1-800-222-1222. Do not throw these creams in the trash. Ask Poison Control about what to do with the cream.

Where do these skin-lightening or acne creams come from?

- Creams from Mexico have been sold on the street in the USA.
- Some people bring them into the USA in their luggage or get them from family or friends.

Examples of homemade skin-lightening or acne creams from Mexico

Creams usually are light colored and often turn green or gray. They come in many kinds of jars.



For more information, go to the CDPH web page on mercury in skin creams:
www.ehib.org/paper.jsp?paper_key=MSKC