

Group: High levels of mercury in 19 skin-lightening creams 10/29/2011 | 08:47 AM

At least 19 [skin](#)-lightening cosmetic products may pose dangers to health after they were found to have high levels of mercury, an ecological group said.

EcoWaste Coalition said the mercury levels in these products were as high as 52,100 parts per million (ppm) – way above the 1 ppm safety limit.

“We have uncovered an ugly truth behind some cosmetics with outrageous amounts of mercury that are directly applied to the skin. These products are terribly harmful to health, totally not pretty and blatantly illegal,” [said Aileen Lucero](#), the group's safe cosmetics campaigner.

Mercury is readily absorbed by the skin and can damage brain function and is particularly hazardous during fetal development, the group said.

It added mercury is linked to nervous, immune, reproductive and respiratory toxicity.

Lucero said the 19 items were part of a batch of 25 products they tested, ahead of the third Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee meeting for a global mercury control treaty in Nairobi, Kenya on October 31 to November 4.

The tests showed 76 percent (19 of 25) of the samples had mercury levels ranging from 1,395 ppm to 52,100 ppm. None of these samples listed mercury as an ingredient. They included:

1. Long Dian Tu Glutathione Pearl Natural Whitening Essence Cream, 52,100 ppm.
2. Beauty Girl 10-Day Double Whitening Speckles Removed Essence Cream, 42,400 ppm
3. Jonathan 12-day Clearing Facial Spots Cream, 28,200 ppm
4. Feique Rose Refining Nourishing Set Cream, 21,600 ppm
5. Lianglibai Qingbanxuejizuhetaozhuang Cream, 15,000 ppm
6. Pretty Model Whitening and Freckle Removing Cream, 11,000 ppm
7. Yudantang Aloe Pearl 10-Day Whitening Speckles Removed Essence Cream, 10,700 ppm
8. Women of Flower Whitening and Speckle Removing AB Series Cream, 9,643 ppm
9. Lamb Placenta Whitening and Anti-Aging Cream, 8,816 ppm
10. Jiaoli 7-Day Specific Eliminating Freckle AB Set Cream, 7,053 ppm
11. Sara Glutathione Sheep Placenta Whitening and Anti-Aging Cream, 6,548 ppm
12. Jiaoli Miraculous Cream, 5,297 ppm

13. Forever Beauty 10-Day Special Cream, 5,199 ppm
14. JJJ Magic Spots Removing Cream, 5,034 ppm
15. New Baijiasi Whitening Night Cream, 4,912 ppm
16. Beauty Girl Double White SPF17AP Whitening Cream, 4,452 ppm
17. (Skin whitening cream with Chinese characters on the label), 2,235 ppm
18. Miss Beauty Excellent Therapy Whitening Cream (violet packaging), 1,453 ppm
19. Miss Beauty Excellent Therapy Whitening Cream (old rose packaging) 1,395 ppm

"We appeal to the conscience of concerned retailers to stop selling such toxic merchandise as we advise consumers to be on red alert for products that can ruin their skin and health," Lucero said.

Last Aug. 4, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a list banning 50 skin whitening products for having mercury levels above 1 ppm and posing imminent danger or injury to consumers.

The FDA's move stemmed from tests by EcoWaste US-based IPEN that showed 11 of the 12 skin whitening products had mercury levels of up to 28,600 ppm.

Test buys

From October 20 to 23, EcoWaste conducted test buys of 25 samples from stores selling health [supplements](#) and beauty products in five shopping centers in Metro Manila.

Out of the 25 samples, 12 were among those already banned by the FDA.

EcoWaste said the mercury-laced skin whitening products were mostly imported from China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Some even came from Germany, Japan and Saudi Arabia as indicated on the labels.

Aside from mercury, the group said its latest tests also showed some of the samples also had high levels of arsenic, cadmium and lead. — **LBG, GMA News**