

FDA warns against mercury in skin care products

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is warning consumers and estheticians to be on the lookout for hazardous levels of mercury in foreign-manufactured skin lighteners and anti-aging treatments. Mercury damages the kidneys and the nervous system, interferes with fetal brain development, and can affect brain development in children.

You don't even have to use the product yourself to be affected, says FDA toxicologist Mike Bolger, Ph.D. "People can get mercury in their bodies from breathing, if a member of the

household uses a skin cream containing mercury." In Northern California, a woman who had been using a mercury-containing skin cream for three years had more than 100 times the average amount of mercury in her urine and had symptoms of mercury poisoning, according to the California Department



of Public Health. Family members who did not use the cream also had elevated levels of mercury.

In southern Texas, a teenager who used a mercury-containing skin cream was recently hospitalized for mercury poisoning. Texas health officials say samples of face cream they tested contained mercury up to 131,000 times the allowable level. Virginia, Maryland, and New York have also seen cases of mercury poisoning from skin care products. In Minnesota, 11 of 27 imported skin care products taken from store shelves contained mercury.

Recommendations from the FDA:

- Check the label of the skin care products you use. If the ingredients include "mercurous chloride," "calomel," "mercuric," "mercurio," or "mercury," stop using the product immediately. Thoroughly wash your hands and any other parts of your body that have come in contact with the product. Contact your health care professional for advice, or call the National Poison Center at 800-222-1222.
- If no ingredients are listed, do not use the product. Federal law requires that ingredients be listed on the label of any cosmetic or drug.
- Don't use products labeled in languages other than English, unless English labeling is also provided.
- Before throwing out a product that may contain mercury, seal it in a plastic bag or leak-proof container. Check with your local environmental, health or solid waste agency for disposal instructions.©



Get to know your State Board

When was the last time you checked your State Board's website? Legislative changes happen frequently, and you may not hear about upcoming changes that affect you until they have already passed. Don't miss the opportunity to have your say. Links to websites and other contact information for all state regulatory agencies can be found at www.ascpskincare.com/resources/legislative.php. The page also contains a quick guide to current licensing requirements in every state, which can be downloaded in PDF form.©

Enter now for the Gerson Award

The National Coalition of Estheticians, Manufacturers, Distributors and Associations (NCEA) has announced a new award for educators. Entries are now open for the first annual Gerson Award for Excellence in Esthetic Education. Joel Gerson will present the winner on October 27, 2012, at the International Congress of Esthetics & Spa in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Gerson began teaching esthetic skin care and facial treatments in 1970, and soon discovered the lack of educational materials available for the training of estheticians. He was unable to find a practical textbook or comprehensive

course outline that was both thorough and easy to understand. In 1977 he decided to write a textbook that would provide the curriculum materials needed by teachers and students, including step-by-step illustrations. His "Standard Textbook for Professional Estheticians" was published by Milady, and paved the way for state regulatory boards and licensing of estheticians.

The textbook is known today as "Standard Esthetics Fundamentals" and many contributors have played an important role in updating it. In the 1999 edition, NCEA's executive director Susanne Warfield was the co-author of two chapters: "Sterilization, Disinfection and Safety in the Salon," and "Estheticians Working with Physicians."



Associated Skin Care Professionals (ASCP) is proud to be a sponsor of this annual award in honor of Joel Gerson's contribution to esthetic education. To learn more, or to submit a nomination for this year's award, please visit www.ncea.tv. ©

Upcoming training and shows

Planning your travel for teacher training will be more convenient in future, with **National Esthetic Teacher Training (NETT)** events now scheduled in connection with International Congress of Esthetics & Spa (ICES) trade shows. Registration for NETT will include admission to ICES.

The next NETT day will be held immediately prior to ICES at the Arlington Convention Center in Dallas, Texas. NETT will run from 9:15 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, May 5, with the ICES conference following on May 6-7. Sessions that will be included, for five accredited continuing education units, are:

- Infection control updates, including state and federal regulations
 - Teaching medical esthetics when you've never worked in a medical setting
 - Advanced chemistry: what you need to know to teach it
 - Motivating the student
 - Updating your curriculum panel
- Learn more or register at www.ncea.tv/national-esthetic-teacher-training.



The Cosmetology Educators of America (CEA) annual convention will be held July 27-30 at Walt Disney World Dolphin Resort in Orlando, Florida.

This year's theme will be "Shaping the Future: Teach/Empower/Lead." There will be an entire track of education just for skin care educators. Register by June 15, 2012 for the early bird member rate. Visit www.beautyschools.org or call 800-831-1086 for more information. ©

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face to face

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