

HEALTH WARNING

Some Consumer Products Contain Lead, Mercury and Arsenic

Lead, mercury and arsenic are harmful metals that can cause serious health problems, especially in children and pregnant women. Some health remedies and supplements, foods and non-food items have high levels of these metals, even if they are not listed on the product labels. The more often you use these products, the greater the health risk.

Health Remedies

Some health remedies, supplements and Ayurvedic medications from India, China and other countries have high levels of lead, mercury and arsenic.

These products may be manufactured or handmade, and prescribed or purchased over-the-counter in the United States and in other countries.



Foods

Spices bought in or sent from Bangladesh, Georgia and other countries may have high levels of lead.

Candies, salt snack mixes and other snacks from Mexico that use chili or tamarind pulp may also contain lead.



Cosmetics and Religious Powders

Kohl, kajal, surma and tiro from Africa, Asia and the Middle East may have high levels of lead. These products are primarily used as eyeliner.

Sindoor, a religious powder from India used in Hinduism, may also have high levels of lead.

Lead can get on hands after touching contaminated cosmetics or religious powders. Lead can be swallowed when hands that have touched these items are placed in the mouth. Children are at special risk because they often put their hands in their mouths. Some lead may also be absorbed through the eyes.

Cosmetics and religious powders should never be used in food.



Clay Pots and Dishes

Glazes and paints used to decorate traditional clay pots and dishes (ceramic ware) from Mexico, China and other countries may contain lead.

Lead can get into food and drinks that are prepared, stored or served in this traditional ceramic ware.



Jewelry, Toys, Amulets and Charms

Metal parts of jewelry and toys and the paint used on these items may contain high levels of lead.

Amulets and charms from Bangladesh, Cambodia and other countries may also contain lead.

Lead can be swallowed when these objects are placed in the mouth. Children are especially at risk because they often put objects in their mouths. Lead is not usually absorbed well through the skin.



Skin-Lightening Soaps and Creams

Skin-lightening soaps and creams from the Dominican Republic, China and other countries may contain mercury, which can be easily absorbed through the skin.

Do not use these items if mercury is listed as an ingredient or if they do not list ingredients.



WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE USED THESE OR SIMILAR PRODUCTS



Stop using them



Ask your doctor to test you for lead and other heavy metals



Call 311 or visit nyc.gov/hazardousproducts for a list of specific products to avoid