



# Mercury in Skin Lightening Products

## Did you know?

*Mercury is a metal sometimes found in skin lightening creams, soaps, and traditional health remedies. Mercury is toxic to the brain and kidneys. Mercury can spread in the air and affect others in the home.*

## Action Plan

- Avoid skin lightening products that:
  - Do not list any active ingredients or have incomplete ingredient lists.
  - Are manufactured outside of the United States.
  - Are called beauty creams, pearl creams or whitening creams and claim to treat freckles, age spots, wrinkles, acne or uneven skin tone.
  - List mercury as an ingredient.
  - Are listed on [NYC Hazardous Products: Mercury in Soaps and Creams](#).
- Safely dispose of mercury-containing products.
  - Do not throw mercury-containing products in the trash.
  - Place products in a sealed bag out of children's reach.
  - Bring products to the Department of Sanitation's Special Waste Drop-Off sites or SAFE Disposal Events.
- Protect yourself and your family.
  - Stop using mercury-containing products immediately.
  - Ventilate rooms and thoroughly wash hands, skin and any surfaces that touched these products.
  - If you have used products to lighten your skin, contact your health care provider to discuss whether a spot urine

[more](#) →



mercury test corrected for creatinine from a certified lab is needed.

- People with mercury poisoning may not look or feel sick but look out for symptoms in yourself and your family (skin rashes, numbness or tingling in hands and feet, tremors, headaches, muscle weakness, or memory issues).

## Resources

To learn more about mercury-containing products, visit:

- Mercury in Soaps and creams -  
<https://www.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/mercury-in-soaps-and-creams.page>
- Hazardous Products: Dietary Supplements and Remedies -  
<https://www.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/hazardous-supplements-remedies.page>
- Mercury and Schools: A Risky Combination -  
<https://health.ny.gov/environmental/chemicals/mercury/brochures/risky.htm>

To learn more about safe disposal options for skin lightening products, visit:

- Special Waste Drop-Off sites -  
<https://www.nyc.gov/site/dsny/what-we-do/programs/special-waste-drop-off.page>
- SAFE Disposal Events -  
<https://www.nyc.gov/site/dsny/what-we-do/programs/safe-disposal-events.page>

To learn more about mercury and other heavy metals in fish, visit:

[https://nyscheck.org/RXP/NYC/rx\\_english\\_Fish\\_NYC\\_WEB.pdf](https://nyscheck.org/RXP/NYC/rx_english_Fish_NYC_WEB.pdf).