



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
**Department of Toxic Substances Control**

## Media Alert

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### DTSC Warns about Proper Disposal of Dangerous Skin Lightening Creams Containing Mercury

**SACRAMENTO** – The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) advises the public that anyone possessing dangerous face cream products suspected to contain mercury should dispose of them at a local household hazardous waste facility. The [California Department of Public Health recently issued a Health Alert](#) about those skin lightening face creams from Mexico and other countries that contain enough mercury to cause health problems.

These products are used to lighten skin color, fade freckles and age spots, remove wrinkles, and treat acne. Many of these products are in unlabeled containers or have containers that say “mercury”, “mercurio”, or “calomel” (mercurous chloride) on the label.

Mercury can be highly toxic to humans. It can cause nerve damage like tremors, memory loss, weight loss, and fatigue. Mercury can damage kidneys causing kidney failure.

Products containing mercury, like face creams, should be disposed of at a local household hazardous waste facility to keep mercury from leaching into groundwater from a land fill. Disposing of hazardous waste properly helps to reduce the amount of mercury and other toxic metals in the environment.

A list of contact information for local household hazardous waste collection program can be found at:

[http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/HazardousWaste/UniversalWaste/upload/HHW\\_Llist\\_PUBLIC.pdf](http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/HazardousWaste/UniversalWaste/upload/HHW_Llist_PUBLIC.pdf)

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FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES: Contact the Department of Toxic Substances Control by phone at (800) 728-6942 or visit [www.dtsc.ca.gov](http://www.dtsc.ca.gov). To report illegal handling, discharge, or disposal of hazardous waste, call the Waste Alert Hotline at (800) 698-6942.

***The mission of the Department of Toxic Substances Control is to protect public health, safety, and the environment from toxic harm.***