

FDA Warning about Hand Sanitizers Containing Methanol

Executive Summary:

The FDA has put out a recommendation that advises all consumers to **NOT** use any hand sanitizer products manufactured in Mexico by the company Eskbiochem SA de CV. There is potential for these products to contain methanol (aka wood alcohol), which can be extremely toxic when absorbed through the skin or ingested. The FDA notified the manufacturer (6/17/20) that they should remove the products from sale but the company has not yet responded. The FDA suggests that anyone with any of these products immediately dispose of them in an appropriate hazardous material container. The liquid/gel should not be poured into any drain, toilet, the ground, waterway or sewer. They also instruct anyone who has been exposed to sanitizers containing methanol to seek immediate treatment to reverse the potential toxicity. Symptoms can range from nausea/vomiting to permanent damage to the CNS or death.

The link to the FDA Warning, as well as more information is contained in the expanded version below.

The FDA has posted an Advisory to warn all consumers to **NOT** use any hand sanitizer products made by the manufacturer **Eskbiochem SA de CV in Mexico** since they potentially **contain methanol** (wood alcohol) rather than ethanol. **Methanol can be extremely toxic to anyone if enough is absorbed through the skin or ingested; particularly with kids who may accidentally ingest it, even just by licking, or teens or adults who may intentionally drink it for the alcohol.** Because of its toxicity, methanol is not considered an appropriate ingredient in hand sanitizers. The list of the potentially toxic hand sanitizers is found within the FDA Notice here:

<https://www.fda.gov/drugs/drug-safety-and-availability/fda-advises-consumers-not-use-hand-sanitizer-products-manufactured-eskbiochem>

Signs & symptoms after enough contact/ingestion may range from headache, nausea and/or vomiting, blurred vision, uncoordinated gait, seizures, coma, permanent blindness or other permanent damage to the nervous system, and death. Any of these signs or symptoms, associated with possible contact with ingestion of any of the products listed, would indicate an urgent need for management and treatment (see specifics in the last section of this document).

The FDA tested both Levar Gel which contained 81% methanol and zero ethanol as well as Clean Care No Germ which contained 28% methanol. **The FDA has notified the manufacturer (6/17/20) that they should remove the products from sale but the company has not responded.**

The FDA has not received any reports of adverse effects associated with these products but encourages anyone (consumers, patients, and/or health care providers) to report suspected adverse events from these products to the FDA's MedWatch Adverse Event Reporting Program @ [MedWatch Adverse Event Reporting](#)

The FDA also suggests that anyone with any of these products immediately dispose of them in appropriate hazardous material containers. They should not be poured into any drain, toilet, the ground, waterway or sewer.

Importance of the FDA Notice for First Responders/Public Safety:

1. With the ongoing difficulty of procuring Pandemic-related supplies, agencies may have purchased some of the suspect hand sanitizing products for work spaces or personnel may have bought them for use at work or home. They may also come across them as they respond on calls or during the course of work. In any case, these products pose a potential risk and should be identified, and standard policies or consultation with a supervisor on how to manage the encounter should occur.
2. There may be a call to respond to a sick or even injured person (occurring when the methanol caused a nervous system change such as blurred vision, AMS, loss of consciousness), but when use of a hand sanitizer product may or may not be known. These patients may have a wide age range. Intentional ingestion is likely going to be those that want/need alcohol but may not have ready access to liquor such as teens or homeless individuals. Any vomitus or breath may smell like alcohol although it's different than ethanol. If absorption/ingestion may have taken place, assess and monitor airway and CNS signs, consult Poison Control (800) 222-1222 for advice on assessment and management, if allowed by Medical Direction/Protocol. Transport per Poison Control or Medical Direction, as indicated. Note: gathering any vomitus or containers may be helpful at the hospital.