

# Antifreeze Toothpaste

The customs department have been chasing down shipments of two particular brands of toothpaste that have been found to contain the toxic substance diethylene glycol. The Chinese manufactured Mr. Cool and Excel brands were shipped in from Panama some months ago and have been on sale in various small supermarkets, shops and warehouses in Santo Domingo and other places. Unsuspecting staff in shops have been selling the two products, not knowing that there was a problem. Some of the toothpastes, 'Junior Excel and 'Papitas' were bubble gum and strawberry flavoured aimed specifically at children.

Authorities are not sure how much of this product is in the country but are actively tracing shipments to track down any remaining contaminated products.

So far, around 10,000 tubes of the tainted toothpaste have been seized in the National District, Samaná, Barahona, Independencia and Elías Piña provinces.

Diethylene glycol had previously been identified as the cause of over 300 deaths in Panama when it was substituted for glycerin in children's cold medicines.

This toxic substance is used in solvents and is a prime ingredient in some antifreezes. When

consumed by humans, it results in difficulty breathing, renal failure and death.

Over the years, certain amoral manufacturers have been substituting the cheaper diethylene glycol in drugs, food, toothpaste and other products for the more expensive glycerine, as both are sweet tasting.

In this latest scare, the toothpaste entered the country, not through the usual regulated channels, but camouflaged in with dog food and other products for animals.

It is not thought that the effects of these toothpastes will be anything like as severe as the previous case with the cold medicine in Panama, as toothpaste is not generally swallowed, but obviously it's a concern as children often do.

Chinese authorities are investigating the suspected manufacturer of the products, Danyang City Success Household Chemical Company, and also questioning another toothpaste maker, Goldcredit International Trading, in Wuxi. The Danyang factory has been shut down pending further investigations.

Both companies are denying any direct involvement with manufacturing this particular batch of toothpaste. Executives from Goldcredit and Danyang stated that the Mr. Cool brand has been heavily copied by other companies and that numerous other traders could be exporting the brand.

Ms Shi Lei, a manager at Danyang City Success said they

did not export to Panama, although she did admit that her company has used diethylene glycol in its toothpaste, and that the government does not have a clear regulation on how much can be added.

Ms. Shi and other toothpaste makers in this region said that diethylene glycol had been used in toothpaste in China for years and that manufacturers believed



Excel Toothpaste

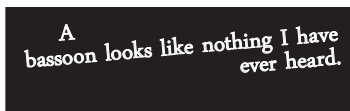
it was not very harmful.

Mr. Hu at Goldcredit also denied being involved in this batch of toothpaste but also indicated that diethylene glycol had been used for years at very low levels in Chinese toothpaste as a glycerin substitute. "If diethylene glycol were poisonous," he said, "all Chinese people would have been poisoned."

He also identified the motivation for substituting diethylene glycol for glycerine.

"You know, if you're in the export market, the margins are small, so people use the substitute," he said. "Even one percent or half a percent price difference can matter to people here."

Similarly tainted toothpaste has been found recently in Panama and even Australia. So far, there have been no reports of deaths or illness resulting from use of the toothpaste.



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The move has triggered criticism in a city that has the worst truancy rates in the country, reports the Daily Telegraph.

The new lessons are to be given to 11-year-olds in nine Manchester schools before being adopted by all the 22 secondary schools in the city. Schools in South Tyneside and Hertfordshire are also taking part, and the project is being jointly paid for by the Department for Education and Skills, the three councils involved and The Young Foundation, a London-based think-tank.

Criticism has come from Nick Seaton of the Campaign for Real Education, who said: "There is considerable doubt that you can teach happiness. Schools already teach citizenship and drugs education but this is a step too far."

In defence, Jenny Andrews, the council's assistant chief education officer and scheme administrator, said: "Research shows that resilience to setbacks can actually be learned and it can be a huge benefit for children in later life."

## Hair Dress



A Croatian model stunned the crowds at a fashion show in Zagreb when she appeared on the catwalk wearing a dress made entirely of human hair.

Designers at Artidjana, the company who made the dress company, used 165ft of blonde hair in the process.

It's not known whether the model, Simona Gotovac was wearing anything else underneath.

*Ed - Surely they're going continued on next page*

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