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To: IEHP PCPs
From: IEHP – Provider Relations
Date: April 19, 2024
Subject: **Public Health Advisory has been issued for Vietnamese Hemorrhoid Cream: Cao Bôi Trĩ Cây Thầu Dầu**

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has issued a health alert about the **Vietnamese hemorrhoid ointment, popular on social media.** "Cao Bôi Trĩ Cây Thầu Dầu," contains a toxic level of lead that has been recently linked to a fatal case of lead poisoning.

The following resources are available on CDPH's website in both English and Vietnamese translations:

- **Public Health Alert** ([Eng](#) | [Viết](#)): Serves as a guide for the general public, detailing the risks associated with the use of Cao Bôi Trĩ Cây Thầu Dầu ointment, the symptoms of lead poisoning, and the steps to take if exposure is suspected.
- **Medical Provider Health Alert** ([Eng](#) | [Viết](#)): Provides background information about the health alert, the index case fatally affected by its use, actionable steps when seeing a patient who was exposed to Cao Bôi Trĩ Cây Thầu Dầu ointment, symptoms of lead poisoning, and clinical resources and guidance in the management of lead poisoning.
- **Medical Letter** ([Eng](#) | [Viết](#)): Those who have used the ointment can take this letter to their PCP to facilitate communication and alert them to the potential of lead exposure and the recommendation for blood lead testing.

For more information, visit: www.cdph.ca.gov/ > Programs > Office of Communications > Health Releases > 2024

Questions? Please contact the IEHP Provider Call Center at (909) 890-2054, (866) 223-4347 or email ProviderServices@iehp.org

All IEHP communications can be found at www.providerservices.iehp.org > Provider Central > News and Updates > Notices

Health Alert

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH



Woman Dies from Using a Hemorrhoid Ointment from Vietnam

A woman in Sacramento developed severe lead poisoning and died after using a hemorrhoid ointment from Vietnam called, **Cao Bôi Trị Cây Thầu Dầu**.

Testing of the hemorrhoid ointment found that it contained four percent lead (39,000 ppm), which is a highly dangerous amount. Lead is toxic. Exposure to any amount of lead can harm health.

The woman purchased the ointment on Facebook, and a relative in Vietnam mailed it to her in the U.S. It is unclear if people can directly buy this ointment in the U.S.



Advice to Consumers

- **Do not purchase or use** this hemorrhoid ointment.
- If you are using this ointment, **stop using it immediately**.
- If you used this ointment, contact your health care provider immediately to **get your blood tested for lead** (venous blood test).

Because other household members could have come into contact with the ointment, all household members should have their blood lead tested. Children are especially vulnerable to lead poisoning.

- If you have this ointment, put the jar of ointment in a **sealed plastic bag and contact** (510) 620-3620 or email toxoutbreak@cdph.ca.gov.

Symptoms of Lead Poisoning

Symptoms of lead poisoning can vary person to person. Symptoms can depend on the amount of lead in a product and how often it is used and for how long. Some people who have lead poisoning may not feel or show symptoms. Symptoms can include:

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| Mild symptoms: | Fatigue, irritability or mood swings, difficulty concentrating, difficulty sleeping |
| Moderate symptoms: | Muscle and joint pain, nausea, decrease appetite, stomach cramps, constipation and diarrhea, feeling tired or sleepy, headache, tremor |
| Severe symptoms: | Severe stomach cramping, pins and needles, tingling, burning or numbness in hands, seizures, coma, death |

For medical consultation: Call California Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222

For more information: Visit our webpage on this alert: go.cdph.ca.gov/Alert-Lead-April-2024

Email: toxoutbreak@cdph.ca.gov | Phone: (510) 620-3620