

DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT #10 WARN OF SERIOUS ADVERSE HEALTH EFFECTS ASSOCIATED WITH METHANOL- BASED HAND SANITIZERS

July 15, 2020 – District Health Department #10 (DHD#10) is urging residents to double check the labels of their alcohol-based hand sanitizers or rubs (ABHSR) for methanol and is warning of the serious adverse health effects associated with methanol-based hand sanitizers.

Methanol, when used as an active ingredient, is a toxic alcohol that can cause blindness and/or death when absorbed through the skin or swallowed.

Last month, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) advised consumers to not use any type of hand sanitizer manufactured by “Eskibiochem SA de CV” in Mexico due to the potential presences of methanol. Since then, the FDA has identified several more hand sanitizing products that contain methanol and are working on voluntary product recalls, which can be found at: <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/drug-safety-and-availability/fda-updates-hand-sanitizers-methanol>

“If you have accidentally swallowed a hand sanitizing product or are experiencing symptoms from repeated use of products on the FDA’s testing and manufacturer’s recalls list, please seek immediate medical attention and contact poison control (1-800-222-1222),” urges Dr. Jennifer Morse, Medical Director for District Health Department #10. “We would highly suggest discontinuing the use of any ABHSR on the FDA’s testing and manufacturer’s recall list because using these methanol-containing products could result in blindness and/or death.”

Hand hygiene, along with wearing a mask or face covering and maintaining social distance is critical in preventing the spread of COVID-19 in the United States. Washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using hand sanitizer are simple and effective ways to decrease the spread of pathogens and infections. Hand sanitizers containing ethanol or isopropanol as active ingredients are safe when used as intended– to clean hands.

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