



# Warning Against Human Consumption of Hydrogen Peroxide

Released: December 18, 2001

The use of 35% Food Grade hydrogen peroxide for homeopathic and medicinal cures has been promoted by several small non-medical organizations and sold unlawfully to the general public under false claims as a “cure-all”. Unfounded health claims by these organizations range from treating acne to curing AIDS and cancer.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has released a strong consumer warning against the use and consumption of this industrial strength hydrogen peroxide by the general public citing instances where people, mainly children, have incurred serious injury or even death from mistaking the industrial chemical for water stored in a refrigerator.

Industrial strength concentrations of hydrogen peroxide, such as the 35% Food Grade product, are strong oxidizers that can be corrosive to the eyes and skin, potentially causing irreversible tissue damage, including blindness. Ingesting industrial strength hydrogen peroxide product may cause “burning” of the gastrointestinal tract, which may be life threatening.

The Food Grade hydrogen peroxide product is specifically manufactured to meet requirements outlined in the Food Chemical Codex. Its use is approved by the FDA for use in applications such as fiber bleaching and aseptic packaging. The Food Grade name designation in no way implies that the product is approved for human consumption.

The FDA has neither cited any therapeutic value nor approved use of hydrogen peroxide for human consumption for medicinal purposes. Thus, the sale of hydrogen peroxide for the express purpose of consumption and treatment of medical ailments is illegal.

FMC Corporation will not sell hydrogen peroxide to any individual or distributor organization that condones the sale and use of the product for human consumption or other non-approved uses.

**Following is the April 13, 1989 FDA press release warning consumers of the dangers of consuming the 35% Food Grade Hydrogen Peroxide.**

# HHS News

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

**P89-18**

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**Food and Drug Administration**

**Mike Schaffer-(301) 443-3285**

The Food and Drug Administration warned today that industrial strength hydrogen peroxide illegally promoted to treat AIDS and cancer has caused at least one death in Texas and several injuries require hospitalization.

The products are sold as "35% Food Grade Hydrogen Peroxide" to be diluted and used in "Hyper-oxygenation Therapy" for AIDS, cancers and more than 60 other conditions. FDA said there is no proof that either the product or the therapy has any medicinal value.

Further, the agency said, this concentration—more than ten times as strong as the 3 percent solution commonly used to disinfect minor cuts - is highly corrosive. FDA considers it dangerous even if it is handled according to the manufacturer's directions.

"This concentration is not approved by FDA for any therapeutic purpose," FDA Commissioner Frank E. Young, M.D., Ph.D., said. "Indeed, no one has come forward with any evidence this substance taken internally has any medical value. Buyers are being cheated and subjected to significant risks and family members are being injured."

The liquid is purchased in bulk from chemical plants in Texas and Mexico and repackaged into smaller containers by distributors. Stored in home refrigerators according to the manufacturers instructions, the corrosive chemical has been mistaken for water and consumed.

FDA in February, while trying to halt the distribution of 35 percent hydrogen peroxide by a distributor operating in Brownsville, Texas, learned of two incidents that occurred last year. In August, a 4-year old girl in Dennison, Texas, poured a drink for her two brothers from a quart bottle that she mistook for water. The resulting injuries required more than six months of medical care and cost thousands of dollars in expense. Then in September, in Conroe, Texas, a mother poured what she thought was water from a bottle in her refrigerator for her two children and a neighbor's child. Her children were severely injured and the neighbor's child died after drinking the liquid.

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The agency said the products - sometimes called "Oxywater" and "H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>" - are promoted as an "alternative medicine" by mail-order distributors in Wisconsin, Minnesota, California and Texas, and by some "health food" outlets.

The concentrated liquid comes in pint, quart and gallon containers with ordinary screw caps or, in some cases, with child-resistant caps.

Literature usually distributed with the product explains how to dilute the concentrated liquid for such unproven or unnecessary uses as sprouting seeds, purifying meat, cleansing laundry, and treating acne, gum disease, athlete's foot, colic, headache, varicose veins, AIDS and cancer.

Materials promoting the product often include printed pages resembling magazine articles along with alleged testimonials that blend various medical facts with fictitious claims and offer the view that hydrogen peroxide's benefits are suppressed by the medical establishment and the government.

The promotion of hydrogen peroxide as a home remedy has continued and has reappeared despite efforts of FDA beginning in 1985 to get distributors of 35 percent hydrogen peroxide to stop making the illegal claims. FDA is not aware of any medical benefits from consuming hydrogen peroxide in any form; no information or applications have been submitted to the agency to support any drug claims for taking this chemical internally.