



News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Consumers Warned Not to Drink Herbal Teas Produced by U.S. Deer Antlers Exports and Imports Inc. Due to Botulism Risk

SACRAMENTO – The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) today warned consumers not to drink herbal tea in plastic pouches produced by U.S. Deer Antlers Exports and Imports Inc. due to concerns the teas may be contaminated with *Clostridium botulinum*. Ingestion of botulism toxin from improperly processed liquid teas may lead to serious illness and death. CDPH is investigating two possible cases of botulism in Orange County residents, both of whom consumed U.S. Deer Antlers Exports and Imports Inc. herbal tea products in March.

U.S. Deer Antlers Exports and Imports Inc. of Los Angeles is voluntarily recalling all herbal tea products in plastic pouches. The 6-inch by 4-inch plastic tea pouches contain labeling in Korean but do not include lot codes or best by dates. The recalled food products were sold to acupuncturists and individuals in California, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, North Carolina, Texas and Virginia. Examples of the [recalled packages](#) are on the CDPH website.

Botulism toxin is odorless and colorless, so consumers will be unable to determine if a product is affected. Customers who have any of these products, or any foods made with these products, should discard them immediately by double bagging the pouch into tightly closed plastic bags and placing them in non-recyclable trash bins outside of the home. Wear rubber or latex gloves, if possible, when handling potentially contaminated products or wash your hands with soap and running water for at least two minutes.

Botulism is a rare but serious paralytic illness caused by a nerve toxin produced by the bacterium *Clostridium botulinum*. Initial symptoms frequently include double or blurred vision, drooping eyelids, and dry or sore throat. Progressive descending paralysis, usually symmetrical, may follow. Additional symptoms may include slurred speech, difficulty swallowing, inability of the neck muscles to support the head and paralysis of the extremities and respiratory muscles. Infants with botulism appear lethargic, feed poorly, are constipated, and have a weak cry and poor muscle tone.

Customers experiencing any ill effects after consuming these products should immediately consult their health care providers. Consumers who find the product being offered for sale are encouraged to report the activity to the CDPH toll-free complaint line at (800) 495-3232.

www.cdph.ca.gov