Important Information for Burmese Communities

**KEY POINTS**

1. Some Burmese babies and children living in America have become sick from using Burmese digestion powders and Thanakha cream.
2. Traditional Burmese medicines bought in Sydney have been tested and found to have dangerous metals that could make people sick, especially children.
3. Please do not use these medicines; put them in the rubbish bin. See a doctor if you or your child has been using these products and is sick.

**What is the problem?**
Because Thanakha and other Burmese traditional medicines aren’t made in modern factories, the contents change from day to day and from place to place. Sometimes dangerous materials may be put in these medicines or might get in by accident while they are being made.

Metals such as lead, arsenic and chromium have been found in a number of Burmese traditional medicines. All of these metals can make people sick. Even if they are put on the skin they can be absorbed, or small amounts could get in the mouth. Babies might get problems such as stomach pains, not eating, vomiting and diarrhoea; they could even get heart or brain problems. Even if used in small amounts, over time these metals can cause skin problems, nerve problems and may lead to skin, bladder and lung cancer.

Australia has strict laws about amounts of metals that can be in food, medicines and other remedies used by people. In Australia all medicines must be tested and registered, and have their contents listed on the label.

**What is the situation in western Sydney?**
NSW Health tested several products being sold in local Burmese grocery stores. Two of the infant powders and one of the Thanakha face creams had very high levels of metals. All the medicines tested are unsafe for babies.
These products have been removed from shops by NSW Health.

**What should you do?**
Everyone is being told not to use these products. If your child has been using these products and has vomiting, diarrhoea or stomach pain, please see a doctor. If you know other people who are using these products, please tell them to stop using them, and to see their GP if worried.

For more information please contact the Public Health Unit on 9840 3603
For interpreter assistance call TIS on 131 450.

Top picture: example of baby digestive powder packet
Bottom picture: examples of Thanakha cream container