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Dok. 30844/ph

31 January 2005

The Danish Consumer Council's response to the Scientific Committee on Consumer Products' (SCCP) public consultation on a preliminary opinion on **HYDROGEN PEROXIDE IN TOOTH WHITENING PRODUCTS**.

We welcome the opportunity to comment on the findings of the SCCP.

Tooth whitening is becoming more popular, and basically all dentists offer tooth whitening. It is a cosmetic procedure which has nothing to do with the hygiene of the mouth.

The scientific data available (included in the SCCP opinion) show that the use of hydrogen peroxide and carbamide peroxide can cause problems for human health.

In Denmark tooth whitening products have been available over the counter, and the Danish Consumer Council had a case in 2003 where a woman, age 45, experienced severe discomfort in both teeth and dentures after using a tooth whitening product called Pure White. Her dentures turned white on the surface and red and swollen underneath.

The Danish Consumer Council brought the case to the attention of the Danish Environmental Protection Agency (DEPA). Unfortunately the case was closed because the DEPA did not have the methods for testing the amount of hydrogen peroxide in the products. NIOM - the Scandinavian Institute of Dental Materials calculated the content of hydrogen peroxide to be around 3.8 - 5%. If this holds true, then there will definitely be an effect, but the product is illegal as a cosmetic product.

According to the importer Pure White is no longer sold over the counter in Denmark.

The Danish Consumer Council is of the opinion that tooth whiteners should not be sold over the counter. The products are only safe when used under controlled circumstances and supervised by a dentist.

Even if the products only contain 0.1% hydrogen peroxide and are considered safe, there is still a risk that a consumer wanting whiter teeth fast will overdose or over-use the products and this way might cause harm to himself/herself.

The documentation in the SCCP's opinion of the harmful effects of hydrogen peroxide and carbamide peroxide shows that misuse or accidental intake of the teeth whitening products can cause allergic reactions and in the worst cases even death.

Therefore it is essential that before using tooth whiteners consumers consult with an authorised dentist who can supervise the use and control the effects on the teeth.

Best regards

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