

Dominican Republic recalls toothpaste

The Miami Herald
Aug. 31, 2007

SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic -- Dominican authorities have seized 100,000 tubes of Chinese-made toothpaste they fear may contain a potentially deadly chemical that has been linked to dozens of deaths in Latin America, a Health Ministry official said Friday.

The toothpaste, mostly small tubes distributed to hotels in Santo Domingo's eastern district, was seized this week after the health ministry was warned about the product by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Health Ministry official Luis Emilio Felix Roa said.

Most of the seized toothpaste, which may contain diethylene glycol, known as DEG, came in red or green tubes with brand names written in Chinese characters, Felix Roa said. Health officials did not know Friday if the toothpaste arrived directly from China.

There have been no reported health problems related to the Chinese-made toothpaste in the Dominican Republic, Felix Roa said. Hundreds of thousands of tubes of Chinese-produced toothpaste were recalled in the Dominican Republic in May.

DEG, a thickening agent often used as a low-cost substitute for glycerin, is blamed for the deaths of at least 94 people in Panama after a misleadingly labeled shipment of the solvent, which originated in China, was mixed into cough syrup.

China shut down a chemical plant linked to the deaths, and Panamanian authorities filed charges against the administrator of a Spanish company that allegedly resold the chemical to the country.

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The Associated Press

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