

Connecticut Department of Public Health

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Fax Cover Sheet

DATE: January 25, 2008 **TIME:**

TO: Directors of Health
Chief Sanitarians
Lead Contacts **PHONE:**
FAX:

FROM: Alan J. Buzzetti, RS **PHONE:** (860) 509-7299
Supervising Environmental Analyst **FAX:** (860) 509-7295

RE: Raja Foods Issues Nationwide Recall on SWAD BRAND POWDERS --
ABIL, GULAL, KANKU, and KUM KUM and also ceremonial kits that
carry the powders, LAGAN SAMAGRI Kit and POOJA SAMAGRI kit.
The FDA also issued a warning about SWAD SINDOOR Containing
High Levels of Lead

cc: LPPCP Staff, Suzanne Blancaflor, Jeff Curran, Frank Greene, and Tracey Weeks

Number of pages including cover sheet: 3

Message:

Please see the enclosed information regarding lead exposure risk in powders used in religious ceremonies and for cosmetic use. Raja Foods LLC is recalling packages of products used for religious ceremonies in Indian culture because the products contain high levels of lead, which is toxic if ingested by children and can damage the central nervous system, according to the company.

The products "Swad Brand: Abil, Gulal, Kanku, Kum Kum" and "Swad Brand: Lagan Samagri Kit, and Pooja Samagri Kit," include powders intended to be placed on the skin or hair, according to the Skokie, Ill., company. They were distributed through Indian grocery stores in Colorado, Georgia, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, Washington and Wisconsin.

This notice comes about a month after the FDA issued a warning about "Swad Sindoor" powder, also due to high levels of lead. The "Swad Sindoor" brand is an orange or red powder used in some traditional South Asian Pacific ceremonies that is applied to the face or scalp. Although the product was not intended to be sold for food use, its labeling is confusing and implies that it may be used as food. The Illinois Department of Public Health has confirmed two cases of lead poisoning in consumers who used the product as an ingredient in home cooked meals. Other uses of the product, including as a cosmetic, can also be dangerous due to the high lead levels.

Consumers who have purchased any of these products are urged to return them to the place of purchase for a full refund. Consumers with questions may contact the company at 1-800-800-7923 x 2860. People concerned about blood lead levels should call their doctor or health clinic about testing. You may contact Lead Poisoning Prevention and Control Program staff at (860) 509-7299 should you have any additional lead-related health questions.

Raja Foods Issues Nationwide Recall on SWAD BRAND ABIL, GULAL, KANKU, KUM KUM, LAGAN SAMAGRI, AND POOJA SAMAGRI Containing High Levels of Lead

Contact:

Rakesh Patel
800-800-7923

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -- January 16, 2008 -- Raja Foods LLC of Skokie, IL is recalling its 3.5 oz. (100 g) packages of "SWAD BRAND: ABIL, GULAL, KANKU, KUM KUM," and "SWAD BRAND: LAGAN SAMAGRI KIT, and POOJA SAMAGRI KIT" because the product contains high levels of lead. Lead is very toxic and dangerous to humans, especially children, women of childbearing age, pregnant women and their unborn children. Although people with lead in their blood often do not exhibit the symptoms of lead toxicity, such symptoms include the following: stomach aches, colic, nausea, vomiting, abnormal irritability, and insomnia. Lead can also permanently damage the central nervous system, resulting in learning difficulties in school children as well as cause other long-term health problems.

These products were distributed through Indian grocery stores in Colorado, Georgia, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, Washington and Wisconsin.

These products are used in India for religious purposes and are intended to be placed on the skin or hair. Although the product was not intended to be sold for food use, its labeling may be confusing and may imply it may be used as food. The ABIL, GULAL, KANKU, and KUM KUM product is distributed in a 3.5 oz. (100 g) plastic bag with a front label stating "SWAD BEST TASTE IN TOWN SINDOOR", "FOR RECIPE IDEAS VISIT OUR WEBSITE : WWW.RAJAFOODS.COM", and "PRODUCT OF INDIA." The LAGAN SAMAGRI and POOJA SAMAGRI product is distributed in plastic bins with a front label stating "SWAD BEST TASTE IN TOWN POOJA SAMAGRI" SWAD BEST TASTE IN TOWN LAGAN SAMAGRI" The back label states "Imported and Distributed by: Raja Foods, 8110, N. St. Louis Avenue, Skokie, ILL 60076", and a sticker stating "NONEDIBLE".

External use of the product does not pose a health hazard. Consumers who have purchased any of these products are urged to return them to the place of purchase for a full refund. Consumers with questions may contact the company at 1-800-800-7923 x 2860.

FDA Warns Consumers Not to Use Swad Brand Sindoor: Product Contains High Levels of Lead

Orange or red powder that is applied to face or scalp: not intended for food use

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - December 15, 2007-- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is warning consumers not to use 3.5 oz. packages of Swad brand sindoor, an orange or red powder used in some traditional South Asian Pacific ceremonies that is applied to the face or scalp, imported by Raja Foods LLC of Skokie, Illinois because the product contains high levels of lead. Although the product was not intended to be sold for food use, its labeling is confusing and implies that it may be used as food. The Illinois Department of Public Health has confirmed two cases of lead poisoning in consumers who used the product as an ingredient in home cooked meals. Other uses of the product, including as a cosmetic, can also be dangerous due to the high lead levels.

Lead can be toxic to all humans but due to the risks it poses to a developing nervous system, women of childbearing age, pregnant women and their unborn children, and young children should be especially cautious and limit their exposure to lead. Symptoms of lead toxicity include: stomach aches, colic, nausea, vomiting, abnormal irritability, and insomnia. However, people with lead in their blood often do not exhibit symptoms. Permanent damage to the central nervous system from lead exposure can result in learning difficulties in school children as well as cause other long-term health problems such as kidney disease. Anyone who has consumed this product should consult his or her health care provider immediately.

At least 280 packages of Sindoor were distributed to grocery stores that specialize in foods from India in Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin.

The front label of the bag states "SWAD BEST TASTE IN TOWN SINDOOR", "FOR RECIPE IDEAS VISIT OUR WEBSITE: WWW.RAJAFOODS.COM", and "PRODUCT OF INDIA." The back label states "Imported and Distributed by: Raja Foods, 8110, N. St. Louis Avenue, Skokie, ILL 60076", with a UPC of 0 51179 42236 0 and may have a sticker stating "NONEDIBLE".

Packages of Sindoor can be returned to the place of purchase for a full refund. Consumers with questions may contact the company at 1-800-800-7923 x 2860.