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Zinc in Denture Creams Poses Risk

By JENNIFER CORBETT DOOREN

The Food and Drug Administration suggested that manufacturers consider taking zinc out of denture cream, following reports of neurological problems that might be associated with zinc poisoning.

Zinc is a mineral that is naturally present in some foods, available as a dietary supplement and added to certain products. Zinc has been added to denture cream to boost its adhesive properties. The FDA said in a Feb. 23 letter sent to denture-adhesive manufacturers that it's received "numerous reports of adverse events related to the use

of denture creams" consistent with zinc toxicity.

GlaxoSmithKline PLC announced last year that it was removing zinc from its Poligrrip brand and other denture-adhesive products. At the time the company said it had "become aware of potential health problems associated with the long-term excessive use of our zinc-containing denture adhesive products."

Symptoms of zinc toxicity include nerve damage or numbness in the extremities and blood disorders. High doses of zinc can cause a copper deficiency, which studies have shown can cause nerve damage.

The FDA said that zinc overexposure "maybe be a contributing factor in these adverse events."

Questions about possible neurological damage from zinc poisoning have spurred dozens of lawsuits against Glaxo and Procter & Gamble Co., which makes Fixodent.

A P&G spokeswoman said, "we take the FDA's issued letter very seriously," adding that "providing safe products for consumers is our number one priority."

The Fixodent label tells consumers that the product contains zinc and instructs consumers on how to use the product appropriately.