

# mercury in cosmetics



The **highly toxic** chemical element, **mercury**, is found in some cosmetics, particularly some skin-lightening creams and soaps



It may be absorbed through the skin where it blocks the formation of the pigment melanin



Mercury can **accumulate** in the body over time and **damage** the nervous system, kidney and other organs



The addition of mercury in some skin-lightening creams is often not disclosed, and some labels may even be written in a foreign language

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Make a conscious effort to check labels on these cosmetics before buying. Find and use mercury-free alternative cosmetics.

### Mercury may be listed as

- Ammoniated mercury
- Mercurous chloride
- Hg
- Calomel
- Mercuric
- Mercurio
- Cinnabaris



## PARTIES TO THE MINAMATA CONVENTION AS OF JUNE 2018

- Antigua and Barbuda
- Guyana
- Cuba
- Jamaica
- Dominican Republic
- Saint Kitts and Nevis

As Parties to the Minamata Convention, these Caribbean countries have agreed to take measures to end the import, export and manufacture of mercury-added products – **including cosmetics with potentially harmful concentrations of mercury** (above 1ppm) – by 2020



The Basel Convention Regional Centre for the Caribbean (BCRC-Caribbean)

Developed under the project "Development of Minamata Initial Assessment for the Caribbean (Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago)

For more information, visit the Global Mercury Partnership website and [www.bcrc-caribbean.org](http://www.bcrc-caribbean.org)