



**For Immediate Release
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Consumer Alert Consumer Alert ***Consumer Alert***

**ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN WARNS OF TAINTED
TOOTHPASTE DISCOVERED IN ILLINOIS**

Investigators Find Hundreds of Tubes For Sale in Low End Discount Stores

Chicago - Attorney General Lisa Madigan warned Illinois consumers today of possibly counterfeit toothpaste that has made its way to Illinois store shelves. The counterfeit product, falsely labeled as “Colgate,” may not contain fluoride and may contain diethylene glycol (DEG), a chemical used in anti-freeze that can cause serious health risks including liver and kidney damage and death. A day-long sweep in Chicago neighborhoods, ordered by Attorney General Madigan, has turned up more than 483 tubes of suspect toothpaste on store shelves. The majority of the toothpaste turned up at low end discount stores, increasing the health risks to underserved neighborhoods.

“Our number one goal is to get this product off store shelves and give consumers information to protect themselves and their families,” said Attorney General Madigan. “It is outrageous to learn that a product we use to maintain healthy teeth could actually be dangerous to our health.”

The potentially toxic toothpaste is a counterfeit product and can be identified from its packaging, which indicates it was manufactured in South Africa. Consumers, especially those who purchase toothpaste at low end discount stores, should closely examine their toothpaste tubes and should immediately stop using any tubes that claim to have been manufactured in South Africa. Consumers can visit the Attorney General’s Web site at www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov to access photos of the counterfeit product.

“If you find this product in your home, immediately stop using it and contact Colgate,” Madigan urged. “In addition, I have alerted the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Chicago Department of Public Health of our findings and have asked them to take all necessary steps to ensure the removal of these dangerous and counterfeit products from Illinois stores and have offered my office’s ongoing assistance.” Madigan added.

Consumers can contact Colgate about the toothpaste by calling 1-800-468-6502 and also can visit their Web site for additional information at <http://www.colgate.com/app/Colgate/US/Corp/HomePage/ToothpasteSafety.cvsp>

“Consumers can be our eyes and ears, helping to track down tainted tubes and

crack down on sales by reporting any suspicious products on shelves,” Madigan said. “If consumers find the product on a store shelf, they are urged to contact the Attorney General’s office at 1-888-414-7678 so that investigators can go out and remove the toothpaste from the store.

The Attorney General’s staff will continue to search out these products and work with the wholesalers to ensure that they are reaching all stores that carry them. As investigators find tainted toothpaste on store shelves, they are stopping sales and ordering retailers to hold on to the merchandise for the time being.

“It is important to reduce and eliminate products that threaten our public health. This counterfeit toothpaste was found to contain a chemical that is toxic to the kidney and liver and posed a serious health risk,” said Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. Eric E. Whitaker. “We must remain vigilant that consumer products meet U.S. safety standards and take action when they don’t.”

On June 14, Colgate-Palmolive announced that counterfeit toothpaste was found in discount stores in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Maryland. On July 10, counterfeit toothpaste also was found in discount stores in Connecticut. The Attorney General directed inspectors to begin checking store shelves in Illinois for potentially tainted toothpaste on July 11.

The AG’s office also found Colgate toothpaste with Chinese writing on the packaging and labeling that states the product was made in China. Colgate-labeled toothpaste with Chinese writing is not authorized for sale in the United States. Consumers should contact Colgate with any questions.

Investigators so far have inspected 20 stores on Chicago’s North and West Sides, and in Springfield. Five of the stores inspected – all in Chicago – were found to be carrying the toothpaste: Eagle 99 Plus Eagle, 3201 Lawrence Avenue; Pick n Pay, 4912 W. Madison; Homan Foods, 3358 LeMoyné; Payless Dollar, 5616 W. Madison; and Midwest Cash & Carry, 2577 W. Armitage.

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