



- Please immediately bring to the attention of all doctors -

Date: 24 December 2009

Chief Medical Officer: 8226-2578 (24 hours/7 days)

BonSoy soy milk: information for Medical Practitioners

Key points

1. BonSoy soy milk has been withdrawn from the marketplace following detection of high levels of iodine in this product. This product should not be consumed.
2. A cluster of 7 and possibly 8 adult cases in one practice in NSW have been diagnosed with thyroid conditions believed to be associated with consumption of BonSoy soy milk
3. In addition, a newborn has been diagnosed with hypothyroidism secondary to iodine excess following maternal consumption of BonSoy during the pregnancy
4. Doctors should be alert to seek information about BonSoy soy milk consumption by any persons presenting or who have presented in the past months with thyroid conditions and report these cases.

BonSoy is a soy milk product distributed in SA. Tests have shown it to contain extremely high levels of iodine and consumption has been linked to clinical thyrotoxicosis and hypothyroidism. Exceeding the safe upper limit for iodine intake may occur when 30ml is consumed per day by an adult, or 5ml for a child. The recommended safe upper limit for iodine is: Young children (1 to 3 years) – 200µg; Older children and Adolescents – 900µg; Adults – 1,100µg.

Signs and Symptoms excessive iodine intake: Excess iodine can lead to hyperthyroidism or, less commonly in adults, hypothyroidism. Infants appear more susceptible to hypothyroidism following excessive iodine exposure.

Case Definition: - Any patient presenting with thyroid dysfunction (either hyperthyroidism or hypothyroidism) and a history of regular consumption of BonSoy Soy Milk ie any quantity at least 3 times per week over the last 3 months.

Medical Management: Patients should be advised not to consume the product and to dispose of it either down the drain or in the garbage bin. Iodine has a half life of approximately 30 days. When a patient presents with a history of prolonged BonSoy soy milk consumption together with symptoms or signs listed above, Medical Practitioners should consider measurement of TSH. If the TSH is abnormal, proceed to measurement of the urinary iodine level (normal range in children 100-500 ug/L) and thyroid antibodies and consider referral to an endocrinologist or at least try to obtain phone consultation with an endocrinologist. There is no need to measure the urinary iodine level if the TSH is normal as stopping the ingestion of the milk will return the body's iodine levels to normal within a few weeks.

Advice to patients who report they have drunk the milk and are pregnant: see her GP or obstetrician for a TSH measurement. The baby may also need additional TSH and free T4 measurement after birth (but this is usually routinely done with the Guthrie heelprick test); If the TSH is abnormal, then thyroid ultrasound and thyroid scan are indicated. The effect of the high iodine levels will be to block synthesis of thyroid hormones causing hypothyroidism which in the neonatal period could cause a permanent loss of cognitive function.

Reporting: suspected case (as defined above) should be reported by fax to 08 8226 7102 with your contact details (including phone number) and patient's name, address, phone number, DOB, sex, clinical details, consumption history of BonSoy milk, stage of pregnancy (if pregnant), relevant TSH/T4/T3/Guthrie heel prick results and other information you think relevant.

Advice to the general public: advice for the general public about the recall of BonSoy soy milk product and a fact sheet about iodine is available on the Food Standards Australia and New Zealand website: <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/>

Professor Paddy Phillips, Chief Medical Officer, SA Health

Information contained within this advice should be treated as confidential and is for the intended recipient only.