

HHS NEWS

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Food and Drug Administration
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The Food and Drug Administration today told the distributor of Cal-Ban 3000 diet tablets and capsules to stop distributing them because they may cause throat obstruction and because their promotional materials make unproved claims.

Cal-Ban is distributed nationwide by Health Care Products of Lutz, Fla., which also does business as Anderson Pharmacals of Tampa, Fla.

The agency told Health Care Products to recall existing supplies and advised consumers to stop using Cal-Ban 3000 immediately and to return any remaining pills to their place of purchase.

FDA said it has reports from health professionals of at least 17 people who experienced esophageal obstruction after ingesting Cal-Ban tablets. Ten required hospitalization. One person died of a blood clot that reached the lungs a week after surgery to remove an obstruction in the throat.

FDA said it was also investigating similar diet products to determine if they pose the same health hazard. Cal-Ban's main ingredient is guar gum, a complex sugar that swells when it becomes wet and can create a sense of fullness when ingested.

FDA had already been moving to ban guar gum because its effectiveness as a weight loss ingredient has not been demonstrated. It announced in May that some 100 diet product ingredients that had not been shown to be effective would be taken off the market through a proposal to be published this fall.

Florida stopped state sales of Cal-Ban 3000 on July 18 of this year, saying it had information on 50 cases involving injuries. The agency has asked for the cases for its early review and analysis.

FDA noted that guar gum is approved for use in small amounts in foods such as cheese, salad dressings and ice creams. The agency said this use is not a health concern.

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