

## CHIEF DENTAL OFFICER OF CANADA ANNOUNCEMENT RE: HAND SANITIZERS

The Chief Dental Officer of Canada has shared the following information with Canada's national oral health organizations:

Health Canada engaged a task force composed of a broad range of technical and scientific experts to assess the health risks posed by hand sanitizers containing technical-grade ethanol. Based on the results of this assessment, Health Canada determined that, when used as directed and for a limited period of time, the public health benefits of using hand sanitizer containing specific sources of technical-grade ethanol outweigh the risk. For more information, consult Health Canada's [risk assessment summary report](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/natural-non-prescription/legislation-guidelines/covid19-technical-grade-ethanol-hand-sanitizer/risk-assessment-summary-report.html). <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/natural-non-prescription/legislation-guidelines/covid19-technical-grade-ethanol-hand-sanitizer/risk-assessment-summary-report.html>

To date, seven companies have been authorized to produce technical-grade ethanol for use in hand sanitizer following a case-by-case risk assessment. Health Canada has published a list of [authorized suppliers](#).

As noted in the Summary Risk Assessment Report, risk is a function of hazard and exposure. The lower the exposure to acetaldehyde in the alcohol-based hand sanitizers, in terms of concentration, quantity of hand sanitizer used in each application, frequency of applications per day, and duration of use, the lower the risk. While the task force considered acetaldehyde levels of 1,000 ppm in their analysis, authorized producers have been working to reduce impurity levels to the point where current levels of acetaldehyde are between 10-400 ppm. Based on these lower levels, the task force is currently reviewing its risk assessment to determine if extensions are warranted for suppliers of technical grade ethanol and producers of hand sanitizers, and whether any of the conditions including additional labelling requirements need to be adjusted. The updated risk assessment report should be available in mid-June.

To help you identify hand sanitizers that may contain technical-grade ethanol, we have published a [list of manufacturers](#) who received "No Objection Letters" from Health Canada to produce hand sanitizers using authorized technical-grade ethanol. <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/natural-non-prescription/legislation-guidelines/covid19-technical-grade-ethanol-hand-sanitizer/manufacturers.html#wb-auto-5>

**Products on this list do not necessarily contain technical-grade ethanol.** Manufacturers may continue to produce the hand sanitizer using food or pharmaceutical grade ethanol, switching to technical-grade only when higher quality grades cannot be sourced.

The best way to identify whether a hand sanitizers contains technical-grade ethanol, is to refer to the product label. The product **label must clearly indicate that it contains technical-grade ethanol**, and include the following statements. The first two warnings reflect the fact that the task force did not assess the risk specifically to children, pregnant, and breastfeeding women. This takes a cautious approach and is consistent with Health Canada's approach to mitigate risk and protect vulnerable populations.

- Do not use if you are pregnant or breastfeeding;
- Adults only;
- Do not inhale; and
- Do not use on broken or damaged skin.

The health and safety of Canadians is Health Canada's top priority and the Health Department is doing everything possible to facilitate access to products needed to slow the spread of COVID-19. The Department encourages anyone who has information regarding the potential non-compliant sale of a health product, including technical-grade ethanol, to report it using the [online complaint form](#). <https://health.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/compliance-enforcement/problem-reporting/health-product-complaint-form-0317.html>