PR Newswire

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HEADLINE: FDA ISSUES GHB WARNING

DATELINE: WASHINGTON, Nov. 8

BODY:

The Food and Drug Administration today warned consumers to discontinue use of an illegally marketed drug -- GHB or gamma hydroxybutyric acid -- that has been promoted as a "legal psychedelic" but has caused more than 30 people in California, Florida and Georgia to become ill with symptoms ranging from nausea and vomiting to severe respiratory problems, seizures and coma.

Health departments in those states have been working with the FDA to learn more about the GHB-linked illnesses. Thus far, the investigation has uncovered strong evidence linking GHB consumption to the illnesses.

Gamma hydroxybutyric acid, also called sodium oxybate and gamma hydroxybutyrate sodium, is a chemical that is being promoted for strength training, body building, weight loss and as a replacement for L-tryptophan, a food supplement that FDA ordered removed from the market last year after it was linked to a rare blood disorder.

GHB has been used in Europe as an anesthetic adjunct and it is being evaluated in FDA-approved clinical trials for the treatment of narcolepsy.

The FDA offered consumers the following medical advice:

-- Anyone taking GHB outside of physician-supervised clinical trials should stop immediately.

-- Anyone who has consumed GHB and is experiencing seizures, uncontrolled shaking, headache, unexplained drowsiness or other central nervous system disorders, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea should consult their physician immediately.

-- Physicians treating patients exhibiting these conditions should report these cases to their local poison control center.

According to the California health department, GHB is sold through mail order outlets, health food stores, body building gyms and fitness centers. It is marketed as powder or granules. CONTACT: Bill Grigg, 301-443-3285 or, after hours, 202-652-1864; or Donald McLearn, 301-443-4177 or, after hours, 301-926-6909, both of the Food and Drug Administration

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