

China death not linked to 'product quality': Coke

December 2 2011

Coca-Cola said Friday there was no "product quality issue" with its Pulpy Milky drinks, after a boy who had consumed the product died and three others fell ill.

Stores around the country pulled bottles of the fruit-flavoured milk drink from their shelves after a boy died and his mother fell into a coma in the northeastern Chinese province of Jilin.

Two other people, a mother and daughter, were also hospitalised after drinking a bottle of Pulpy Milky, but have since recovered and returned home.

Investigators have said the drinks were tainted with organic phosphorous, a toxic pesticide, the China News Service reported on Wednesday.

"This case does not involve a product quality issue," said Joanna Price, Coca-Cola's China-based spokeswoman, without elaborating.

"Our company takes the recent incidents ... very seriously. Our thoughts are with the two affected families and we have reached out to them to express our concern and compassion."

State media have said police in the city of Changchun, capital of Jilin are treating the case as a murder, meaning criminal intent is suspected in the [poisonings](#).

"To ensure public health and safety, our company is fully and actively cooperating with work of the local authorities," Price said, adding that the company had temporarily pulled bottles of strawberry-flavoured Pulpy Milky from shelves in Jilin.

Pulpy Milky is made by Coca-Cola subsidiary Minute Maid. The Jilin government said nearly 60,000 bottles of the suspect drink had been removed from store shelves as of Friday.

According to press reports, stores in several other Chinese cities including Beijing and Shanghai have also stopped selling the drink.

Police in Changchun refused to comment on the investigation when contacted by AFP.

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