

Illegal toad venom 'aphrodisiac' linked to NYC man's death

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Ingredient in products called 'stone' can dangerously alter heart rhythm, city health officials say.

(HealthDay)— "Stone," an illegal aphrodisiac that contains substances derived from toad venom, may have claimed the life of a New York City man and should be avoided, city health officials warned.

Last week, a hospital told the New York Poison Control Center about a 39-year-old man who died after taking the product, also known as Piedra China, Jamaican Stone, Love Stone, Black Stone or China Rock.

Similar products caused poisonings and deaths in the 1990s, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene said in a news release. Since 2000, there have been seven such cases, including the most recent one and one earlier this year.

These supposed aphrodisiacs are banned by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration but are imported illegally. Stone is a hard, dark brown substance typically sold as a solid chunk less than a square inch in size.

Stone's active ingredients include chemicals known as bufadienolides, which are derived from toad venom and some trees. These chemicals can disrupt heart rhythm, [city health](#) officials said. The products pose the greatest risk when ingested, but can also cause harm when applied to the skin, the typical use.

Symptoms of poisoning include chest pain, abdominal pain and vomiting. People should call the Poison Control Center immediately if poisoning from [stone](#) is suspected.

People with these products should immediately stop using them and wrap them and put them in the garbage. Do not flush them down the toilet, the health department said.

City officials are working with federal authorities to halt sales of these product, the health department said.

More information: The American Academy of Family Physicians has information about [erectile dysfunction](#).

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