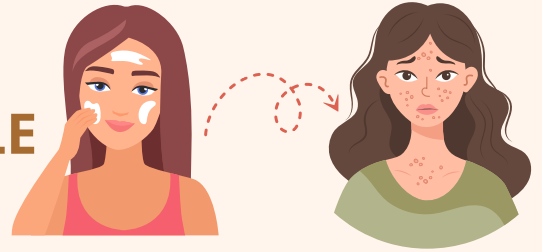


TOXIC SKIN LIGHTENING PRODUCTS REMAIN AVAILABLE

A FOLLOW-UP STUDY IN 2025



In Bangladesh, societal beauty standards have fueled the demand for skin-lightening products, many of which contain toxic substances like mercury. Despite national and international regulations, studies from 2017 to 2025 reveal the continued presence of hazardous creams in both offline and online markets, posing ongoing health and environmental risks.

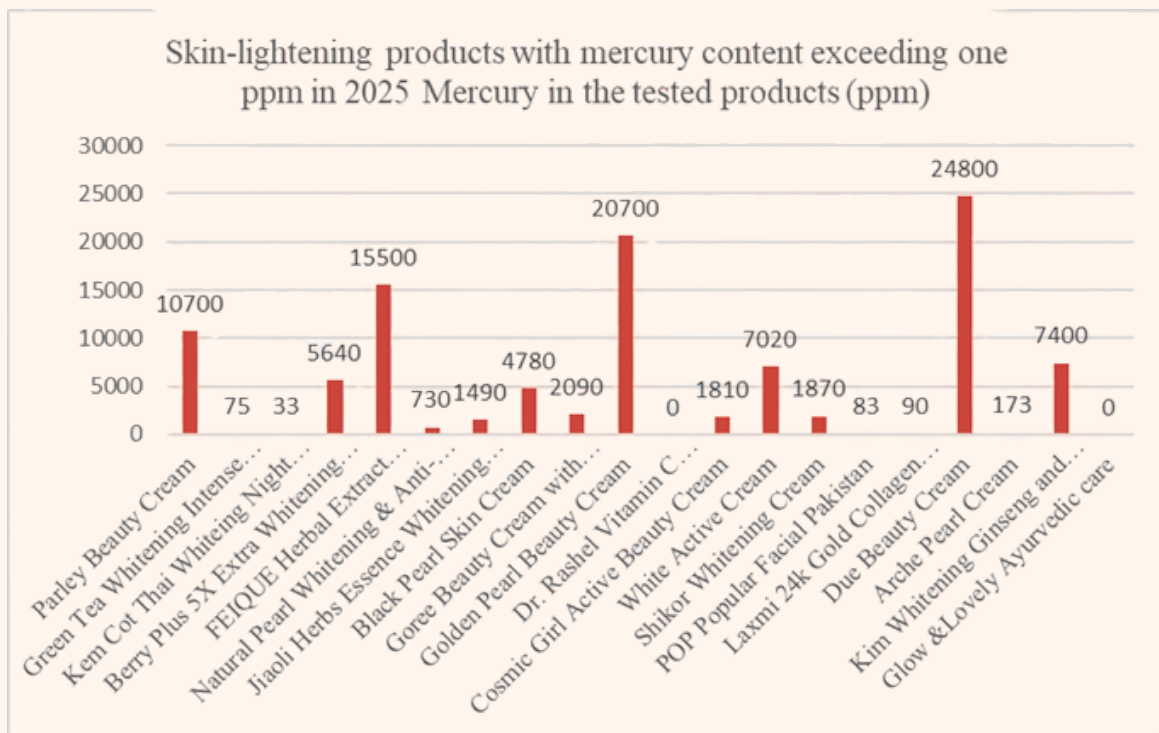
Why Mercury Has No Place in Skin-Lightening Products

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the health impacts of mercury are numerous, including kidney and nervous system damage as well as skin problems.

According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), exposure to mercury can have serious health consequences. The danger isn't limited to people who use mercury-containing products; it also extends to their families. Family members may inhale mercury vapors or come into contact with contaminated items such as washcloths or towels. Some individuals, especially pregnant women, nursing babies, and young children, are particularly vulnerable to mercury toxicity. Babies are especially sensitive to the damage mercury can cause to their developing brains and nervous systems. Newborns who nurse are at risk because mercury can be passed through breast milk.

Mercury Levels in Tested Skin-Lightening Creams 2025

In 2025, Environment and Social Development Organization - ESDO, in collaboration with European Environmental Bureau (EEB) and Zero Mercury Working Group (ZMWG), conducted the study, while Ban Toxics carried out laboratory testing of the skin-lightening product samples.

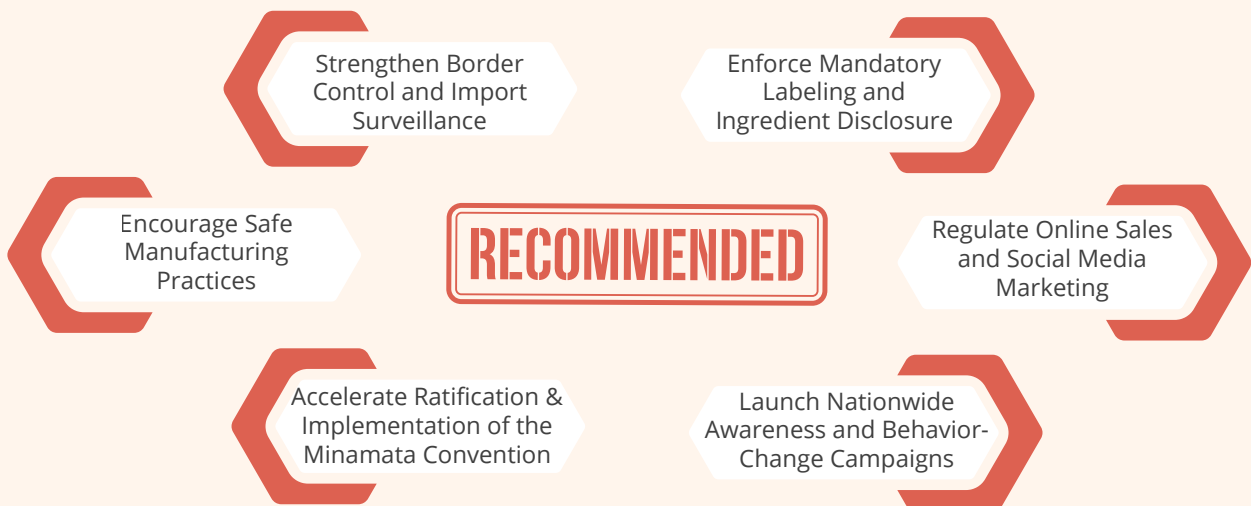
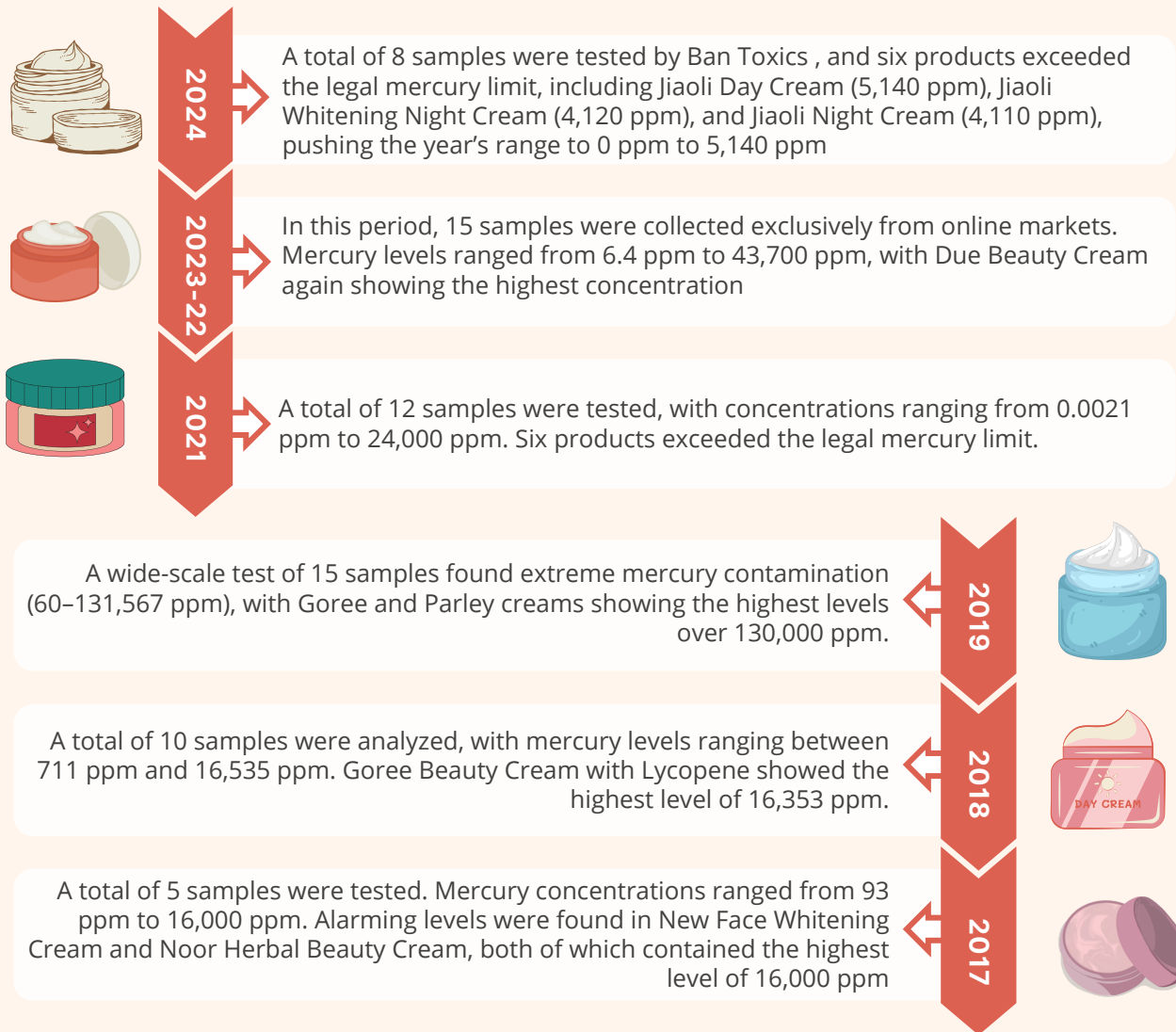


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Tracking the Trend from 2017 to 2024

From 2017 to 2023, Environment and Social Development Organization - ESDO collected samples, which were tested by Zero Mercury Working Group (ZMWG). In 2024, ESDO conducted the study in collaboration with Ban Toxics (Philippines), confirming the continued presence of products exceeding legal mercury limits.



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