

# CDA POSITION STATEMENT

## Benzene in BPO Containing Products

***This is a joint position statement in collaboration with the Acne and Rosacea Society of Canada***  Acne and Rosacea Society of Canada

Benzoyl peroxide has been widely used for the treatment of acne for over 60 years. On March 5, 2024, Valisure, an American laboratory which independently tests medications and consumer products, issued a citizen petition to the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) raising concerns about benzene, a known human carcinogen, in benzoyl peroxide acne products.

Valisure's testing detected levels of benzene beyond FDA thresholds (2 parts per million) in benzoyl peroxide products from various manufacturers available in the United States. In their testing, 66 different benzoyl peroxide products, both prescription and over the counter, were incubated at 50 C for 18 days. Valisure detected over 10 parts per million (ppm) of benzene in 42 products, greater than 100 ppm in 17 products and over 1500 ppm in 2 products. Incubated benzoyl peroxide products typically displayed an increase in benzene concentration over time and with increased temperature.

Valisure's findings suggest that benzoyl peroxide products on the market could produce substantial amounts of benzene when stored at above-ambient temperatures, such as in a hot car. Moreover, benzene produced in the products may escape into the surrounding air. Based on their findings, Valisure recommended an investigation and market withdrawal of benzoyl peroxide containing products.

Health Canada is currently reviewing Valisure's findings and has yet to issue recommendations.

The Acne and Rosacea Society of Canada and the Canadian Dermatology Association would like to raise awareness of Valisure's findings of benzene in benzoyl peroxide acne products while we await further testing and Health Canada's recommendations. In the meantime, use of these products remains a personal choice. If you do decide to continue using benzoyl peroxide containing acne products, avoid storage in hot environments such as hot cars and shower stalls and discard the product before its expiry date. Alternative options to benzoyl peroxide for acne are available including salicylic acid, glycolic acid and retinoids. Consult with your health care professional for more details.

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*Established in 1925, the Canadian Dermatology Association (CDA) is a member organization that advocates for dermatologists across Canada, underscoring their essential role in the healthcare system. As a community of Certified Dermatologists, we are dedicated to advancing the science of dermatology encompassing over 3000 skin, hair and nail conditions. Our commitment extends beyond professional support; we also protect and educate the public through comprehensive educational initiatives and our product recognition program.*

