

Australia issues advice on kava

13/03/2002-

Australia's pharmaceutical watchdog, the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), has issued a consumer alert about the possibility of liver toxicity associated with the use of kava. Australia is the latest country to issue a warning about the possible side effect of the popular herbal remedy. The product has already been removed from sale in Europe and North America.

"Reports from Germany and Switzerland have linked kava extracts with 30 serious cases of liver toxicity, some of which have resulted in the need for liver transplantation," the TGA said. "The products implicated in these reports are medicines which contain chemically extracted ingredients of kava as opposed to kava in herbal form prepared by traditional methods (as used for ceremonial and recreational purposes by Pacific Islander and other cultural groups)."

The agency stressed that there had been no Australian cases of liver failure or related problems due to kava-containing medicines reported to the Adverse Drug Reaction Unit of the TGA. *"The strength of the association between kava-containing medicines and liver toxicity is still being evaluated and those patients most at risk are still to be identified. Until this information is available, the matter is being treated with great caution since liver toxicity is a serious safety concern,"* it said.

In addition to the consumer alert, TGA also issued a practitioner alert and assembled a [kava fact sheet](#).