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FDA: Zicam Nasal Spray May Cause Loss Of Smell



Reporting
Anne State

CHICAGO (CBS) — Check your medicine cabinet. Tonight, the FDA is telling people to throw out Zicam Cold Remedy Nasal Gel because you could lose your sense of smell. As CBS 2's Anne State reports one victim says it's about time.



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A beautiful spring-time rain, but Quint Bridenstine says he can't smell it or any of the flowers in his backyard.

"No, I can't," Bridenstine said.

He says he took Zicam and now he can't really smell anything.

"I have to hold it right up to my nose if I want to smell anything," Bridenstine said. "All women's perfumes smell the same to me."

The Food and Drug Administration is now telling people not to use Zicam Cold Remedy Nasal Gel and nasal swabs saying they can damage nerves in the nose and permanently damage your sense of smell.

All the over-the-counter products contain zinc. Scientists say that ingredient may damage nerves in the nose needed for smell.

Chicago attorney Grant Dixon sued the makers of Zicam saying they marketed a dangerous product. He says since the product was marketed as a homeopathic or natural remedy, it was able to fly under the FDA's radar.

"We assume that if it's on the shelves, it's been tested and it's safe," Dixon said. "And what the FDA is saying by telling people not to use Zicam is that's not necessarily the case."

CBS 2 called a company spokesperson who told us that Zicam makes over a dozen products and only three are affected by the FDA's action. None of the oral products are affected by the FDA warning.

And as for the nasal cold remedies, the company says scientific evidence shows they're safe and effective. The company also says no plaintiff has ever won a court case alleging loss of smell.

When asked what happened in his lawsuit, Dixon said, "We're not allowed to say."

Dixon says his case is no longer pending. He wouldn't elaborate, but he did say that Zicam once settled a class action lawsuit. The company did not confirm that.

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