

Indonesia says contaminated medicines linked to 99 deaths

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Employees wait for customers at a counter displaying a notification saying that the sale of medicinal syrup is temporarily halted at a pharmacy in Jakarta, Indonesia, Thursday, Oct. 20, 2022. Indonesia temporarily halted the sales of medicinal syrups that treat fevers, coughs and colds after it found contaminated medicines that are suspected of causing the deaths of a number of children this year due to kidney failure. Credit: AP Photo/Tatan Syuflana

Indonesia has found contaminated medicines that are suspected of being linked to the deaths of 99 children this year due to acute kidney injury, officials said Thursday.

Indonesia's Food and Drug Monitoring Agency said it was tracing 26 medicinal syrups used to treat fevers, coughs and colds, noting that testing showed five such medicines had ethylene glycol levels "that exceeded the safe threshold," it said in a statement.

The Health Ministry, which banned all syrup medicines on Wednesday, is working with the food and [drug](#) agency to determine which other drugs to potentially withdraw as a [preventive measure](#), Health Minister Budi Gunadi Sadikin said.

There have been 206 cases of acute kidney injury in children reported from 20 provinces in Indonesia this year, and a death rate of 48%, the Health Ministry said Wednesday.

"Previously, there were only a few cases of kidney injuries, only one or two every month. But at the end of August there was a spike in cases that got our attention. It is an atypical progressive acute kidney injury. We call it atypical as the cause is still under investigation or unknown," said Mohammad Syahril, a spokesperson from the Health Ministry.

However, the agency cautioned that other risk factors can also cause [acute kidney injury](#).

The Food and Drug Monitoring Agency, together with the Ministry of Health, pharmaceutical experts, clinical pharmacology experts, the Indonesian Pediatrician Association and other related groups are exploring other risk factors.

Syahril said there is no evidence of any link between the kidney injuries

in these cases and the COVID-19 vaccine or virus infection.

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