Concerns over a potentially toxic children’s cough syrup have prompted a wider recall across Africa.

Tanzania, Rwanda, and Zimbabwe join Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa in pulling a specific batch of Johnson & Johnson’s (JNJ.N) Benylin Paediatric cough syrup from shelves.

The action follows findings by Nigeria’s National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) that detected high levels of diethylene glycol in the syrup during laboratory tests.

According to Nigerian medical experts, Diethylene glycol is a chemical linked to several tragic incidents of child deaths from oral medication poisoning in recent years.

Rwanda’s Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) also issued a recall of the specific Benylin Paediatric batch on April 12th. This action comes despite their statement that “a review of our safety database doesn’t reveal any adverse events reported.”

However, the Rwandan authority emphasizes a “precautionary measure” to ensure public safety.

It’s important to note that while Johnson & Johnson manufactured the recalled batch in South Africa in May 2021, the Benylin Paediatric brand is no longer under their ownership. Following a spin-off last year, Kenvue (KVUE.N) now holds ownership of the brand.

As previously mentioned, Tanzania’s Medicines and Medical Devices Authority (TMDA) initiated the recall on April 12th after learning of the Nigerian test results. Similar precautionary measures are being taken by other countries.

Meanwhile, Kenya’s Pharmacy and Poisons Board (PPB) announced their participation in the recall on April 14th, following Nigeria’s initial action. The Kenyan regulator is expected to release their own test results on the syrup by April 17th.

The widespread recall highlights the importance of consumer awareness. Parents and caregivers are advised to check the batch numbers of any Benylin Paediatric cough syrup they may have at home.

The affected batch can be identified by working with local health authorities or

contacting Johnson & Johnson directly.