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Child dies after being administered neem oil

TNN, Mar 20, 2010, 06.52am IST

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CHENNAI: One-and-a-half year old Dilip,who was administered neem oil to wean him off breast milk,died on Thursday after nearly six days of intensive care at the Institute of Child Health (ICH).

Doctors suspect that the oil could have contained a poisonous alkaloid,strychnine.In fact,the ICH has reported 50 such deaths in the past year.

Minutes after he was given the neem oil at his residence in Adambakkam,Dilip swooned.His sister,Devi (4),who was also given the oil for deworming,also collapsed.Their parents,Geetha and Lingam,daily wage labourers,rushed them to the ICH in Egmore on Saturday.

It is the most common scene we see in the hospital these days.At least 50 children have died due to strychnine poisoning in the past year.Strychnine is used as a pesticide to kill rodents and birds.We found that some shops sell neem oil which is either adulterated or contains strychnine, said Dr Saradha Suresh,ICH director.

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