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HEALTH SCIENCES AUTHORITY
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HSA ALERT: FOUR PRODUCTS DETECTED WITH POTENT UNDECLARED INGREDIENTS; ONE CONSUMER HAD A LIFE-THREATENING EVENT AND SEVERE HEART FAILURE

The Health Sciences Authority (HSA) is alerting members of the public not to purchase or consume four products which have caused serious adverse reactions in consumers. One consumer lost consciousness and required resuscitation, and now suffers from severe heart failure. The products were tested by HSA to contain undeclared potent medicinal ingredients, including a banned substance for weight loss and a potent steroid. The four products are:

Name of product	Undeclared potent ingredients in the product	Serious adverse reactions experienced by consumers
'BB Body'	Sibutramine	Extremely fast heart rate, leading to loss in consciousness, and requiring resuscitation. Consumer now suffers from severe heart failure.
'Bello Smaze'	Sibutramine	Heart palpitations, insomnia and having suicidal thoughts
'Choco Fit'	Sibutramine	Heart palpitations
'Seahorse Chop Du Zhong Ba Ji Wan'	Dexamethasone Chlorpheniramine Frusemide	Cushing's syndrome

Please refer to [Annex A](#) for photos of the products and [Annex B](#) for more information on the medicinal ingredients found in these products.

ADVERSE REACTIONS DUE TO SIBUTRAMINE IN WEIGHT LOSS PRODUCTS

2 A woman in her 50s had purchased 'BB Body' from an online seller based in Malaysia after coming across an Instagram post of the product. After consuming it for about 3 months, she developed extremely fast heart rate (ventricular tachycardia), which led to a loss of consciousness, requiring resuscitation to save her life. As a result, she now suffers from severe heart failure, and is implanted with a defibrillator (device to regulate heart rhythm). She also requires long term heart failure medications.

3 A woman in her 20s first developed palpitations and insomnia, and subsequently had suicidal thoughts, after taking 'Bello Smaze' for four days. She had purchased the product directly from a local seller to lose weight. According to the consumer, her friend who recommended the product also experienced palpitations and insomnia. Separately, another woman in her 30s experienced palpitations after consuming the product 'Choco Fit' for 2 days.

4 The adverse reactions experienced by these consumers were consistent with the effects from sibutramine, which was found in the three products. Sibutramine was previously a prescription drug but was banned by HSA in 2010 due to an increased risk of heart attacks and strokes, as well as other serious adverse effects.

5 'BB Body', 'Bello Smaze' and 'Choco Fit' were marketed on various e-commerce and social media platforms including Instagram and Facebook. They were marketed as having "no side effects" or being able to deliver fast weight loss within days. HSA has directed the administrators of the local online platforms to remove the affected product listings.

6 Associate Professor Chan Cheng Leng, Group Director of Health Products Regulation Group, HSA, advises consumers: "Do not fall for claims or promises of quick weight loss when purchasing health products, whether they are sold online or in retail shops. Based on HSA's enforcement operations, many of the weight loss

products sold on e-commerce platforms without an established retail presence were found to contain the banned substance, sibutramine. Sibutramine can cause serious adverse effects such as mood disturbances, hallucinations, heart attacks and strokes.”

STERIOD IN PRODUCT LED TO CUSHING’S SYNDROME

7 ‘Seahorse Chop Du Zhong Ba Ji Wan’ was reported to cause Cushing’s syndrome in a man in his 40s. He had purchased the product from a medical hall in Johor Bahru, Malaysia, and took it for more than 2 months to relieve his arthritis. His condition, characterised by ‘moon’ face, thin limbs, thinning of the skin and easy bruising was caused by dexamethasone, a potent steroid that was fraudulently added into the product. Tests by HSA also found that the product contained chlorpheniramine (an antihistamine for allergic reactions).

8 There was another sign that ‘Seahorse Chop Du Zhong Ba Ji Wan’ was an illegal product. The blister strips found in one box carried a different product name, labelled as ‘100% Natural Pure Herbal *Acti Fast’. Tests conducted on the product showed that it contained an additional adulterant, frusemide (a potent medicine for removing excess water in the body). These findings are characteristic of illegal products which are manufactured without any quality control.

ADVISORY TO CONSUMERS

9 Consumers are advised to:

- Stop taking ‘Bello Smaze’, ‘BB Body’ or ‘Choco Fit’ immediately and consult a doctor if you feel unwell or are concerned about your health.
- As ‘Seahorse Chop Du Zhong Ba Ji Wan’ contains a potent steroid, consumers who have taken this product should see a doctor as soon as possible. Discontinuation of steroids without proper medical supervision can cause serious withdrawal symptoms such as fatigue, confusion and low blood pressure, especially when the product has been taken for more than a few weeks.

- Be wary of health products that promise or deliver quick and miraculous effects, or carry exaggerated claims.
- Avoid purchasing health products from unfamiliar sources overseas, and exercise caution when buying such products online. You cannot be certain where and how these products were made. They could potentially be counterfeits or contain undeclared ingredients which can seriously harm your health.

10 HSA has produced a short video on the risks associated with buying health products online. This video can be viewed at https://youtu.be/dmj1_bSqJgA.

ADVISORY TO SELLERS AND SUPPLIERS

- 11 All sellers and suppliers must stop selling these products immediately.
- These are illegal products which contain potent medicinal ingredients.
 - Anyone who supplies illegal health products is liable to prosecution and if convicted, may be imprisoned for up to 3 years and/or fined up to \$100,000.
- 12 Members of the public who have any information on the sale and supply of these illegal products may contact HSA's Enforcement Branch at Tel: 6866-3485 during office hours (Monday to Friday) or email: hsa_is@hsa.gov.sg.

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About the Health Sciences Authority (HSA)

The Health Sciences Authority (HSA) applies medical, pharmaceutical and scientific expertise through its three professional groups, Health Products Regulation, Blood Services and Applied Sciences, to protect and advance national health and safety. HSA is a multidisciplinary authority. It serves as the national regulator for health products, ensuring they are wisely regulated to meet standards of safety, quality and efficacy. As the national blood service, it is responsible for providing a safe and adequate blood supply. It also applies specialised scientific, forensic, investigative

and analytical capabilities in serving the administration of justice. For more details, visit <http://www.hsa.gov.sg/>.

For more updates on public health and safety matters, follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/HSAsg.

About HSA's Health Products Regulation Group

The Health Products Regulation Group (HPRG) of HSA ensures that drugs, innovative therapeutics, medical devices and health-related products are wisely regulated and meet appropriate safety, quality and efficacy standards. It contributes to the development of biomedical sciences in Singapore by administering a robust, scientific and responsive regulatory framework.

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'BB Body' and 'Bello Smaze'



'Choco Fit'



Packaging of ‘Seahorse Chop Du Zhong Ba Ji Wan’



Two different blister strips found in a box of ‘Seahorse Chop Du Zhong Ba Ji Wan’



Description	Potent medicinal ingredients detected
Unlabelled blister strip in one box	Chlorpheniramine, Dexamethasone
Blister strip labelled “100% Natural Pure Herbal * Acti Fast” in another box	Chlorpheniramine, Dexamethasone, Frusemide

INFORMATION ON POTENT INGREDIENTS FOUND IN THE PRODUCTS

Sibutramine

Sibutramine was a prescription-only-medicine for weight loss but has been withdrawn in Singapore since 2010 because of an increased risk of heart attacks and strokes. Other serious adverse effects including palpitations, hallucinations or hearing voices have also been reported by consumers who took slimming products adulterated with sibutramine.

Dexamethasone

Dexamethasone is a steroid and is usually prescribed for inflammatory conditions which should only be used under strict medical supervision. Long-term unsupervised use of oral steroids can cause increased blood glucose levels (which may lead to diabetes), as well as high blood pressure, cataracts, muscular and bone disorders, an increased risk of infections and Cushing's syndrome.

Chlorpheniramine

Chlorpheniramine is an antihistamine used to relieve allergic reactions, such as hay fever, rhinitis, urticaria and asthma. Chlorpheniramine can cause adverse effects which include drowsiness, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea and constipation.

Frusemide

Frusemide is a diuretic used to eliminate water and salt from the body. When taken in excess, the 'water-eliminating' effect of frusemide can cause the depletion of sodium, chloride, body water and other minerals in the body.