



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HEALTH SCIENCES AUTHORITY
PRESS RELEASE
13 SEPTEMBER 2018

HSA ALERT: 'KE LE' WEIGHT LOSS PRODUCT SOLD ONLINE FOUND TO CONTAIN POTENT MEDICINES USED TO TREAT COUGH AND BLOCKED NOSE

The Health Sciences Authority (HSA) is alerting members of the public not to purchase or consume the product marketed as 'Ke Le' ('可乐'), which was sold online and promoted as an appetite suppressant for weight loss. The product packaging was labelled in Korean. HSA tested the product and found it to contain two undeclared potent medicinal ingredients, ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, which could pose serious health risks in individuals with heart conditions.

2 The product was advertised and sold by a local female seller in her 30s, on a Facebook page named 'S.C.L.T.W'. The seller posted personal testimonies and photos of herself before and after taking 'Ke Le' ('可乐') and claimed to have lost about 11kg. When HSA enforcement officers raided her home, they found packets of 'Ke Le' ('可乐') hidden among other food items in her refrigerator. HSA seized the products and directed the seller to remove the product listing from her Facebook page and stop the sale of the product immediately. The seller is currently assisting in HSA's investigations. Please refer to **Annex A** for photos of the products.

DANGERS OF THE POTENT MEDICINAL INGREDIENTS FOUND IN THE PRODUCT

3 Ephedrine and pseudoephedrine are used as medicines to relieve blocked nose and cough for the treatment of common cold, flu and allergies. Based on the seller's recommended dosing instructions, the amount of ephedrine taken per day by unknowing consumers would have been more than four times the limit for the treatment of common cold, flu and allergies. Such dangerously high levels of

ephedrine can cause serious and life-threatening adverse effects, especially in consumers with existing medical conditions (e.g. high blood pressure, heart problems, thyroid disease) and when taken together with caffeine-containing products. These adverse effects include increased heart rate, anxiety, insomnia, high blood pressure, stroke, seizures and even death.

ADVISORY TO CONSUMERS

4 Consumers are advised to:

- Stop taking 'Ke Le' ('可乐') immediately. Consult a doctor if you feel unwell or are concerned about your health.
- Be wary of health products, including beverages which promise quick and miraculous results in weight loss. They may contain undeclared potent medicinal ingredients which can cause serious adverse effects and interactions with drug or dietary ingredients that harm your health and well-being.
- There is no quick and easy way to lose weight. Weight control should be achieved through a combination of a balanced diet and appropriate exercise. You should consult healthcare professionals before using any medication for weight management.
- Do not trust online product reviews, as these testimonials usually cannot be verified. If they seem too good to be true, they usually are.
- Exercise caution when purchasing health products from unknown or unfamiliar sources online, such as personal social media webpages. Anyone can be a seller on these e-commerce and social media platforms. You cannot be certain where and how these products were made. They could potentially be counterfeits or adulterated with undeclared potent or banned ingredients which can seriously harm your health. When in doubt, don't buy.

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

ADVISORY TO SELLERS AND SUPPLIERS

6 All sellers and suppliers must stop selling the 'Ke Le' ('可乐') product immediately.

- These are illegal products that contain the potent medicinal ingredients, ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, which should not be present in such products.
- 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.

7 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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Front and back view of 'Ke Le' product packet



Packets of 'Ke Le' stored on seller's refrigerator shelves

