



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**HEALTH SCIENCES AUTHORITY
PRESS RELEASE**

27 June 2011

REN SEM TU CHON CHIN KUO PILL [人參杜仲筋骨丸] And HUO LI BAO [活力宝] FOUND TO CONTAIN UNDECLARED WESTERN MEDICINES

The Health Sciences Authority (HSA) warns members of the public not to take two health products sold as traditional Chinese Medicines, which have been detected to contain potent western medicines. They are illegal adulterated products which are not approved by HSA and were labelled as the following:

- i. **REN SEM TU CHON CHIN KUO PILL [人參杜仲筋骨丸]**
- ii. **HUO LI BAO [活力宝]**

2 The two products were detected following adverse reaction reports submitted by vigilant doctors, who suspected that their patients had suffered adverse effects after taking them. Upon investigation, these products were found to contain undeclared western medicines by HSA's Pharmaceutical Laboratory. These products are bought from overseas and are not available for sale in the local retail outlets.

3 Ren Sem Tu Chon Chin Kuo Pill [人參杜仲筋骨丸] was found to contain dexamethasone and chlorpheniramine while Huo Li Bao [活力宝] was found to contain piroxicam, chlorpheniramine and frusemide. Members of the public, who have the above-mentioned products in their possession, should stop consuming them as these products can cause serious side effects especially in susceptible individuals.

About the Products and Adverse Reactions

i) Ren Sem Tu Chon Chin Kuo Pill [人參杜仲筋骨丸]

4 Two female patients aged 50 and 80 years old, suffered adverse effects after consuming 人參杜仲筋骨丸, Ren Sem Tu Chon Chin Kuo Pill, a product packaged in yellow labelled box containing round black pills and promoted as traditional Chinese medicine. The product was bought from overseas by the first patient and the second patient obtained it through a friend of the family.

5 The product is labelled for pain relief. The patients were taking the product for a period of 3 months to 2 years and experienced significant weight gain, swelling of lower limbs, muscle aches, increased urination and excessive thirst. These are signs and symptoms consistent with the symptoms of Cushing's Syndrome, which resulted from the prolonged unsupervised use of dexamethasone, a steroid which was one of the undeclared western medicines detected in this product. The patients have since stopped taking the product and are recovering after seeking medical attention. Refer to Annex for details on the adulterants- western medicines.

ii) Huo Li Bao [活力宝]

6 A 60 year old female patient was reported to have taken Huo Li Bao [活力宝], which was promoted as traditional Chinese medicine and packaged in green box containing green capsules packed in foiled blisters. She has been taking it for a few years intermittently to relieve painful inflammation of the knee. The patient suffered adverse effects of high blood pressure, low blood potassium level and suppressed hormonal response leading to low immunity. The patient has been treated and has since recovered.

Public Advisory

7 Consumers who have purchased Ren Sem Tu Chon Chon Kuo Pill [人參杜仲筋骨丸] and Huo Li Bao [活力宝] are advised not to consume these harmful products. If consumers have taken them, they should seek medical attention if they feel unwell or are concerned about their health.

8 Consumers are advised to be wary of traditional and complementary medicines that provide quick or rapid relief of chronic disease condition such as arthritic pain and diabetes, especially if these products claim to cure serious conditions. Such dubious health products have not been assessed by HSA and there is no guarantee of their safety.

9 Members of the public who have encountered these illegal products or any other suspicious products, are encouraged to report their sales to the Enforcement Branch of HSA at Tel: 6866 3485 or Email: hsa_is@hsa.gov.sg.

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27 JUNE 2011

▪ 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, 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. It operates the national blood bank, Bloodbank@HSA, securing the nation's 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/>.

▪ **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.

**REN SEM TU CHON CHIN KUO PILL [人參杜仲筋骨丸] and HUO LI BAO [活力宝]
FOUND TO CONTAIN UNDECLARED WESTERN MEDICINES**



Huo Li Bao [活力宝] (left), Ren Sem Tu Chon Chin Kuo Pill [人參杜仲筋骨丸] (right)

1. Product Label of Ren Sem Tu Chon Chin Kuo Pill

Chinese (original)

名称	人參杜仲筋骨丸
功能与主治	风寒串入经络，强身壮腰，舒筋活络，祛风行血，祛湿散寒。凡腰痛，手足痠痛，筋络疼痛，四肢麻木不仁等症，中风虚弱。
服法与用量：	每次早晚各服一粒，每次服一至二粒，温开水送服
制药商	中国广东省联合制药厂
包装	30 粒

English (translation)

Name	Ren Sem Tu Chon Chin Kuo Pill
Indications:	Poor body circulation due to external pathogens. Improve health and strengthen lower back. Improve mobility and promote blood circulation. Suitable for individuals suffering from low back pain, aching or sore limbs, joint pain or numb limbs accompanied with decreased mobility, or those individuals who suffered from stroke attacks.
Dosage:	One pill twice a day, can consume up to two pill each time
Manufacturer:	China Guangdong Lian He Drug Factory
Packing:	30 pills

2. Product Label of Huo Li Bao**Chinese (original)**

名称:	活力宝
功能与主治:	传统用于关节性疼痛
服法与用量:	每次一颗，每日两颗。
包装	30's 胶囊
分销商	Wai Kang Enterprise, Johor Bahru
制药商	神農氏企业（马）有限公司

English (translation)

Name:	Huo Li Bao
Indications:	For arthritis pain
Dosage:	1 capsule each time, 2 capsules daily

Packing:	30 capsules
Distributor:	Wai Kang Enterprise, Johor Bahru
Manufacturer:	Shen Loo She Enterprise Sdn Bhd, Penang

Undeclared Western Ingredients

- a) Dexamethasone is used for anti-inflammatory purposes (i.e. reduce pain and swelling). Unsupervised long-term use of dexamethasone can cause increased blood glucose levels leading to diabetes, high blood pressure, muscular and bone damage.
- b) Piroxicam, is a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) used to treat pain and inflammation in the body. It can cause gastric bleeding and blood disorders when used in an unsupervised manner.
- c) Chlorpheniramine is a type of antihistamine used in allergic reactions, such as hay fever, rhinitis, urticaria, and asthma. Side effects from unsupervised use of chlorpheniramine include drowsiness, confusion and urinary retention.
- d) Frusemide is a potent diuretic drug that is used to eliminate water and salt from the body. It can cause a profound increase in the output of urine (diuresis). Excessive diuretic effect of frusemide can cause the depletion of sodium, chloride, body water and other minerals in the body.