



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HEALTH SCIENCES AUTHORITY
PRESS RELEASE

12 OCTOBER 2011

HSA ALERTS PUBLIC TO FOUR ADULTERATED HEALTH PRODUCTS WITH UNDECLARED WESTERN MEDICINES

The Health Sciences Authority (HSA) warns members of the public not to take four adulterated health products which are sold as traditional Chinese and Malay medicines. These products have been detected to contain undeclared western medicines and they are not approved by HSA. They are labelled as the following:

- i. **ATHRI-Eze [人參活絡舒筋丸]**
- ii. **SEAR HEANG TIENCHI TU CHUNG WAN [麝香田七杜仲丸]**
- iii. **CAP WIJAYA KUSUMA (AN KI IT)**
- iv. **WIKU JAHE KENCUR (AKUR MUJARAB)**

2 The four products were reported to HSA's Vigilance Branch through the Adverse Event Monitoring System for health products. The alerts were raised by astute doctors and a Chinese physician who raised their suspicions, when the patients suffered adverse reactions or presented with unexpected therapeutic effect after consuming the adulterated products. Upon investigation, these products were tested to contain potent western medicines by HSA's Pharmaceutical Laboratory.

3 The products were obtained by consumers from overseas or friends for self-medication. 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.

i) **ATHRI-Eze [人參活絡舒筋丸]**

4 Athri-Eze [人參活絡舒筋丸] was tested to contain three undeclared medicinal ingredients- dexamethasone, frusemide and paracetamol. It is promoted as a traditional Chinese medicine and packaged in a bottle of 20 white capsules. It is labelled for the relief of backache, joint and muscular pain. Refer to the Annex A for photo of the product and details of the adulterants.

5 A Chinese physician raised his suspicion of the product when his patient told him that it provided instant relief for her chronic arthritic condition after taking the product for a few days. The patient has since stopped consuming the product upon the physician's advice.

ii) SEAR HEANG TIENCHI TU CHUNG WAN [麝香田七杜仲丸]

6 Sear Heang Tienchi Tu Chung Wan [麝香田七杜仲丸] is sold in a bottle of 40 black pills with a red label and claims to treat rheumatic pain and backaches. The medicine was obtained through a friend of the patient. HSA's laboratory subsequently tested the product to contain chlorpheniramine and dexamethasone. Refer to Annex A for details.

7 A female patient in her 70's showed symptoms of Cushing's syndrome such as a bloated face, and the adverse effects were detected by her family physician. The patient has taken the product for over a year to treat the arthritic pain on her shoulders. She has stopped taking the product and is receiving treatment.

iii) CAP WIJAYA KUSUMA (AN KI IT)

iv) WIKU JAHE KENCUR (AKUR MUJARAB)

8 The two products promoted as Malay Jamu medicines, are packed in foiled sachets of brown powder and are labelled to treat rheumatoid and arthritic conditions, swollen legs and stiff joints. The two products were bought from overseas - Cap Wijaya Kusuma (An Ki It), which is sold in a green sachet was tested to contain phenylbutazone and paracetamol. The second product, Wiku Jahe Kencur (Akur Mujarab), which is sold in a red sachet, was found to contain allopurinol, prednisolone and chlorpheniramine.

9 A 70 years old patient was hospitalized for symptoms of dizziness and low blood pressure when he stopped taking the products. The adverse effects are likely to be caused by sudden withdrawal of prednisolone, which is corticosteroid that was found as an adulterant in the product - Wiku Jahe Kencur (Akur Majarab), which he took for about a year. The patient is being treated for the adverse effects.

Public Advisory

10 Consumers who have purchased the above products are advised not to consume any further as they contain potent western medicines, which have to be taken under strict medical supervision. If consumers have taken them, they should seek medical attention if they feel unwell or are concerned about their health.

11 Associate Professor Chan Cheng Leng, Assistant Group Director, HSA says, "We strongly advise consumers to be very wary of products that masquerade as traditional medicines and claim to treat conditions such as arthritic and joint pains. Very often, these products contain undeclared potent western medicines that can cause serious adverse effects in consumers."

12 Traditional medicines are not allowed to contain western medicinal ingredients or substances controlled under the Poisons Act. Anyone found convicted of selling these adulterated products, will face a penalty fine of up to \$10,000 and/or imprisonment for a period not exceeding two years under the Poisons Act.

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

HEALTH SCIENCES AUTHORITY

SINGAPORE

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▪ About the Health Sciences Authority (HSA)

The Health Sciences Authority (HSA) is a multidisciplinary agency that 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. 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 www.hsa.gov.sg.

▪ About HSA's Health Products Regulation Group

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

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Left to Right: ATHRI-Eze 人參活絡舒筋丸, SEAR HEANG TIENCHI TU CHUNG WAN 麝香田七杜仲丸, WIKU JAHE KENCUR - AKUR MUJARAB & CAP WIJAYA KUSUMA - AN KI IT

1. Product Label of ATHRI-Eze

Chinese

名称	人參活絡舒筋丸
功能与主治:	通脉活络, 行血止痛, 扩张血管, 消除病根。主治风湿性关节炎, 急慢性四肢关节炎, 坐骨神经痛, 田足风湿痹痛, 筋骨伤后遗症, 腰酸背痛, 周身骨痛, 肌肉痹痛。
服法与用量:	每日两次, 每次一粒, 用温开水送服。
品牌与制药商:	海龙牌
包装:	20 粒, 胶囊剂

English (translation)

Name	ATHRI-Eze
Functions & Indications:	Improve circulation and dilate blood vessels to ease pain, as well as to treat the root cause. Ideal for rheumatoid arthritic pains, chronic or acute joint inflammation in the limbs, sciatica, complications from bone injuries, low back pain and other discomforts in the body.
Dosage:	1 pill each time, twice a day, to be consumed with warm water
Manufacturer:	SEADRAGON HEALTHCARE SDN BHD No 184 Jalan Munshi Abdullah 75100 Melaka

Packing:	20 capsules
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2. Product Label of SEAR HEANG TIENCHI TU CHUNG WAN

Chinese

名称	麝香田七杜仲丸
主治:	风湿骨痛, 腰酸背痛, 筋骨无力, 关节炎肿
服法与用量:	每日三次, 每次3至5粒, 用开水送服。
品牌与制药商:	阁楼牌
包装:	48 粒, 丸剂

English (translation)

Name	SEAR HEANG TIENCHI TU CHUNG WAN
Functions & Indications:	Rheumatoid or general arthritis, low back pain, limb weakness
Dosage:	3-5 pills each time, three times a day, to be taken with water
Brand and Manufacturer:	Ge Lou Pai
Packing:	48 pills

3. Product Label of WIKU JAHE KENCUR (AKUR MUJARAB)

English (translation)

Name (in Malay):	WIKU JAHE KENCUR (AKUR MUJARAB)
Functions & Indications:	Relieve swollen legs or tingling sensation in the lower limbs, joint pain or stiff joints.
Dosage:	Take 1 sachet, twice a day (morning and afternoon). Brew contents with ½ cup of boiled water (100cc).
Manufacturer:	PJ. Ibnu Sabil, Cilacap – Indonesia
Packing:	Powder, packed in foiled sachet

4. Product Label of CAP WIJAYA KUSUMA - AN KI IT

English (translation)

Name (in Malay):	CAP WIJAYA KUSUMA (AN KI IT)
Functions & Indications (as on the label):	Cure rheumatism, gout and toothaches. Eliminate the feeling of fatigue and lethargy. Relieve low back pain and improve the immune system. For both men and women.
Dosage:	Take 1 sachet, twice a day (morning and afternoon). Brew contents with ½ cup of boiled water (100cc).
Manufacturer:	PJ. Ibnu Sabil, Cilacap - Indonesia
Packing:	Powder, packed in foiled sachet

SUMMARY OF THE UNDECLARED WESTERN INGREDIENTS FOUND

Product	Adulterants found
ATHRI-Eze [人參活絡舒筋丸]	Frusemide, dexamethasone, paracetamol
SEAR HEANG TIENCHI TU CHUNG WAN [麝香田七杜仲丸]	Dexamethasone, chlorpheniramine
CAP WIJAYA KUSUMA (AN KI IT)	Phenylbutazone, paracetamol
WIKU JAHE KENCUR (AKUR MUJARAB)	Allopurinol, prednisolone, chlorpheniramine

- a) Dexamethasone and prednisolone are corticosteroids used for anti-inflammatory purposes (i.e. reduce pain and swelling). Unsupervised long-term use can cause increased blood glucose levels leading to diabetes, high blood pressure, muscular and bone disorders.
- b) Frusemide is a potent diuretic drug that is used to eliminate water and salt from the body. It can cause diuresis. Excessive diuretic effect of frusemide can cause the depletion of sodium, chloride, body water and other minerals in the body.
- c) Phenylbutazone is a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) and was used in humans to treat rheumatoid arthritis and gout. Overdose or prolonged use can cause gastrointestinal ulcers, kidney damage or even death.
- d) Allopurinol is primarily used to treat hyperuricemia and chronic gout. Side-effects are rare, but symptoms such as fever, skin rash, hepatitis and deteriorating renal functions may occur.
- e) Chlorpheniramine is a type of antihistamine used to relieve allergic reactions, such as hay fever, rhinitis, urticaria and asthma. Side effects from unsupervised use include drowsiness, confusion and urinary retention.
- f) Paracetamol is a common over-the-counter pain reliever, where it is used to relieve headaches, minor aches and pains. It is also a common ingredient used in cold and flu remedies. Overdosage of paracetamol can cause potential fatal liver damage.