



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**HEALTH SCIENCES AUTHORITY
PRESS RELEASE
22 JANUARY 2018**

HSA ALERT: TWO HEALTH PRODUCTS FROM DUBIOUS SOURCES LED TO BURNS IN A CONSUMER AND HOSPITALISATION IN ANOTHER

The Health Sciences Authority (HSA) is alerting members of the public not to purchase or use the following two health products:

- (a) 'URE (有利) TONIC HERBAL TRADITIONAL (传统青草营养素)' sold by a traditional practitioner in Malaysia
- (b) Unlabelled brown bottles of facial solution from the 'Anita iBrow' beauty parlour at 11 Orchard Road #B1-42 Dhoby Exchange Singapore 238826

Both products led to serious adverse reactions – one consumer was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), and the other suffered facial chemical burns.

2 HSA has tested the products and found that they contain potent western medicinal ingredients which are prohibited in these products:

- 'URE (有利) TONIC HERBAL TRADITIONAL (传统青草营养素)' contained dexamethasone, a potent steroid.
- The solution in the unlabelled brown glass bottles contained hydroquinone and tretinoin. These are western medicinal ingredients used for the treatment of skin conditions, which should only be prescribed by a doctor and used under medical supervision.

Please refer to **Annex A** for pictures of the products, and **Annex B** for more information about the western medicinal ingredients found in the products.

ADVERSE EVENTS REPORTED TO HSA

4 A female consumer in her 50s had purchased 'URE (有利) TONIC HERBAL TRADITIONAL (传统青草营养素)' from a traditional practitioner in Malaysia. After taking it daily for more than a year to 'strengthen' her body, she developed Cushing's syndrome, a condition caused by prolonged consumption of steroids. She suffered complications such as persistent low blood pressure and a weakened immune system, which resulted in pneumonia and sepsis, a life-threatening condition that involves tissue and organ injuries. She was admitted to the ICU for treatment and is currently undergoing outpatient care.

5 Another female consumer in her 20s visited 'Anita iBrow' beauty parlour in Orchard Road for a make-up session, which included the use of a facial solution. According to the beautician, the facial solution was 'RDL HYDROQUINONE TRETINOIN Babyface Solution 3', which she had purchased from an online platform for use on her customers. She had poured the facial solution into two unlabelled brown glass bottles and sold them to the consumer as 'magic water' to brighten up her skin. After two to three days of daily application, the consumer experienced superficial chemical burns and skin peeling. Her skin had darkened and turned red and itchy, requiring treatment by a skin specialist. HSA has directed the beautician to stop using and supplying the solution. The beautician is currently assisting in the investigation.

ADVISORY TO CONSUMERS

6 Consumers are advised:

- As 'URE (有利) TONIC HERBAL TRADITIONAL (传统青草营养素)' contains a potent steroid, consumers who have taken this product are advised to 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.
- Stop using any unlabelled facial solutions supplied by the 'Anita iBrow' beauty parlour immediately and see a doctor if you are experiencing adverse effects.
- Do not purchase products labelled to contain hydroquinone and/or tretinoin without seeing a doctor as they are potent medicinal ingredients that could cause serious side effects if used without medical supervision.
- Be cautious when purchasing health products from unfamiliar sources, even if they are recommended by friends or relatives. No one can be certain what these products contain, and where and how they were made.
- Avoid buying or using unlabelled health products and be wary of products that promise quick and miraculous results. Such products may contain harmful ingredients which can cause serious health effects.

ADVISORY TO SELLERS AND SUPPLIERS

7 Sellers and suppliers are warned that:

- The supply of 'URE (有利) TONIC HERBAL TRADITIONAL (传统青草营养素)' and 'RDL HYDROQUINONE TRETINOIN Babyface Solution 3' must be stopped immediately. These are illegal products which contained prohibited western 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.

8 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.

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/>.

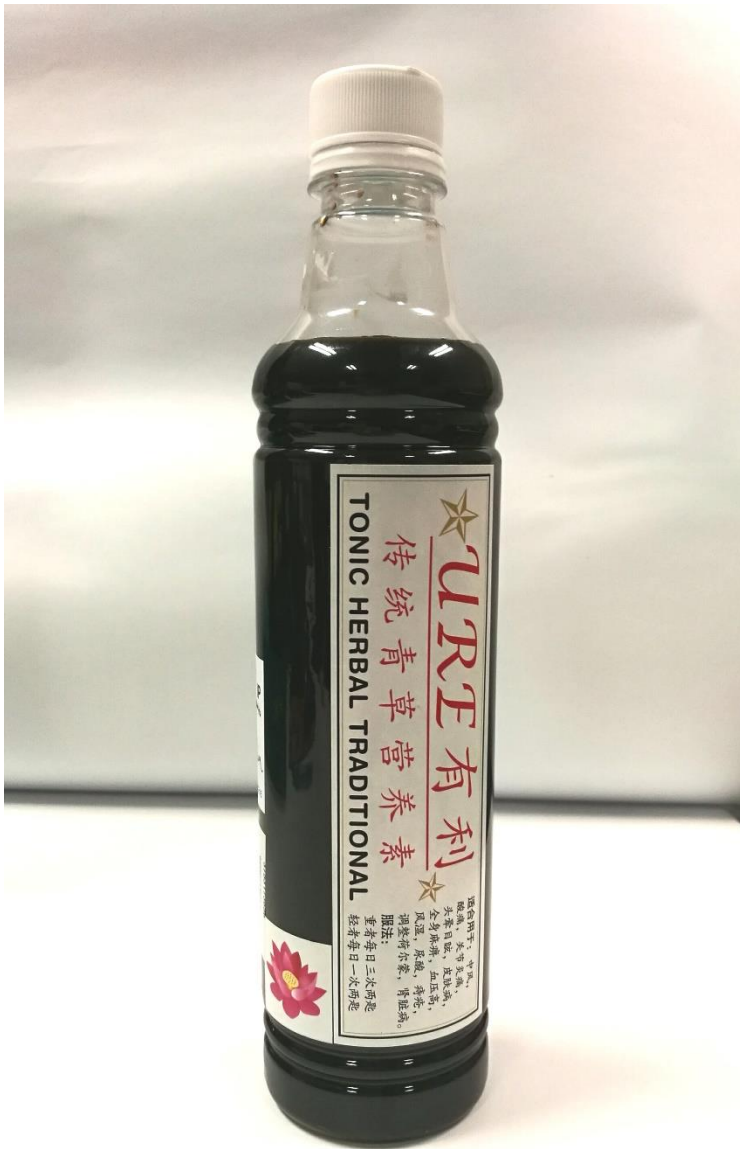
For more updates on public health and safety matters, follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/HSAsg.

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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'URE (有利) TONIC HERBAL TRADITIONAL (传统青草营养素)'



Unlabelled brown glass bottles tested to contain hydroquinone and tretinoin



**INFORMATION ON UNDECLARED WESTERN MEDICINAL INGREDIENTS
FOUND IN THE PRODUCTS**

Dexamethasone

Dexamethasone is a potent steroid that is usually prescribed for inflammatory conditions and should only be used under strict medical supervision. Long term unsupervised use of oral steroids can cause Cushing's syndrome (which is characterised by a round or 'moon face' and upper body obesity with thin limbs), increased blood glucose levels leading to diabetes, high blood pressure, cataracts, bone disorders, an increased risk of infections and muscle weakness.

Hydroquinone and tretinoin

Hydroquinone and tretinoin are potent ingredients that are used in western prescription medicines for the treatment of skin conditions. These ingredients are prohibited in skincare cosmetic products and should only be used under medical supervision as they may cause harmful effects if not used properly. The inappropriate use of hydroquinone could result in changes in skin colour and hypersensitivity reactions. Inappropriate use of tretinoin could lead to redness and peeling of the skin. Minimise exposure to sunlight or ultraviolet light as it will cause repigmentation and photosensitivity reactions on the skin e.g. skin rash and sunburn.