



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**HEALTH SCIENCES AUTHORITY
PRESS RELEASE
25 APRIL 2013**

HSA ALERTS PUBLIC TO ADVERSE REACTIONS RELATED TO ILLEGAL TABITA COSMETIC PRODUCTS PURCHASED ONLINE

The Health Sciences Authority (HSA) is alerting members of the public to three types of Tabita cosmetic products, which were tested and found to contain potent undeclared ingredients, namely hydroquinone, tretinoin, salicylic acid and mercury. The affected products are:

1. Tabita Skincare Smooth Lotion
2. Tabita Skincare Daily Cream
3. Tabita Skincare Nightly Cream

2 HSA was alerted to these products after receiving an adverse event report of a patient who had developed rashes on her face and neck and another report of unexpected rapid whitening of the skin after using Tabita products. These illegal products, which are sourced overseas, are currently sold through the internet. Members of the public are advised to stop using and discard the affected products as they may cause harmful effects.

Safety concerns

3 Hydroquinone and tretinoin are potent ingredients used in western prescription medicines to treat skin conditions and are prohibited in skincare cosmetic products under the Health Products Act. These ingredients should only be used under medical supervision as they can cause harmful effects if not used properly. Inappropriate use of hydroquinone could result in skin discoloration, hypersensitivity, gradual blue-black darkening of the area of application and an increased risk of skin cancer. Inappropriate use of tretinoin could lead to redness to the skin, peeling, and scarring of the skin.

4 The use of mercury as an ingredient in cosmetic products is also prohibited. High levels of mercury or regular exposure could lead to skin numbness, headache, rash, skin discoloration and blotching. In addition, the use of products with high levels of salicylic acid could lead to dry, irritated and red skin.

HSA Advisory

5 HSA would like to reiterate the dangers of purchasing health products including cosmetics from dubious sources over the Internet. They may contain undeclared potent substances that can cause serious harm when used without medical supervision. Consumers who have purchased the above products are strongly advised to discard the products and not to use them any further. Products

containing western medicinal ingredients must be used under strict medical supervision. Those who have used these products should seek medical attention if they feel unwell or are concerned about their health.

6 Consumers need to be aware of the risk of purchasing products online. Consumers should exercise discretion in their purchase of cosmetic products, and purchase them from reliable and reputable sources. Unlike other commodities, the use of poor quality and falsely labelled health products including cosmetics can cause serious health effects.

7 HSA warns sellers to stop the sales and distribution of these affected Tabita cosmetic products. It is an offence for any person to import, sell and supply an illegal or unapproved health product. Anyone found guilty of an offence under the Health Products Act is liable to a fine of up to \$100,000 and/or imprisonment for a term of up to three years. HSA takes a serious view against those engaged in the sale and supply of illegal health products and will take strong enforcement action against such persons.

8 Members of the public who have any information on the sale of Tabita products to may contact HSA's Enforcement Branch at Tel: 6866-3485 during office hours (Monday to Friday) or email: hsa_is@hsa.gov.sg. The public is also requested to report any other suspicious sales of illegal products to HSA at the same contact number/e-mail. Additionally, members of public are encouraged to visit www.healthdangers.sg to learn more about the dangers of buying illegal health products from dubious sources.

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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, 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.

Photos of Tabita Cosmetics Products

