



## **HSA updates on products found overseas that contain potent ingredients (July 2020)**

The Health Sciences Authority (HSA) would like to update the public on products that have been found and reported by overseas regulators in July 2020 to contain potent ingredients which are not allowed in these products and may cause side effects. This information is provided to increase awareness on safety issues of such products found overseas, which may impact the local population. Please refer to Annex A and Annex B for the list of products and the possible side effects of the potent ingredients.

### **HSA's Advisory**

- 2 Members of the public are advised to:
  - Consult a doctor if you have consumed any of the products and are feeling unwell.
  - Avoid buying any of the products when abroad.
  - Exercise caution when purchasing health products online or from sources (either local or overseas) which you may not be familiar with, even if well-meaning friends or relatives have recommended them. You cannot be certain where and how these products were made. They may be illegal, counterfeit or substandard, and may contain potent ingredients which can harm your health. If buying health products online, we encourage you to buy them from websites with an established retail presence in Singapore.
  - Be wary of products that promise quick and miraculous results or carry exaggerated claims like “100% safe”, “no side effects” or “scientifically proven”. Consumers should also be cautious of products that produce unexpected quick recovery of medical conditions.
  - Consult your doctor or pharmacist if you need help for the management of your acute and chronic medical symptoms and conditions (e.g. diabetes, hypertension, eczema).
- 3 Additionally, members of the public are encouraged to visit <https://www.hsa.gov.sg/consumer-safety/> to learn more about the dangers of buying health products from dubious sources.
- 4 Members of the public who come across the sale and supply of these products in Singapore may contact HSA's Enforcement Branch at Tel: 6866 3485 during office hours (Monday to Friday) or email: [hsa\\_is@hsa.gov.sg](mailto:hsa_is@hsa.gov.sg).

## Annex A

### List of Products

*Note: There may be different versions or variants of the products listed below. You are advised to consult your doctor or pharmacist if you are unsure of any health product you intend to use, or if you need help for your acute and chronic medical symptoms and conditions*



Name of product	Picture of product	Potent ingredient(s)	Source (Regulatory Agency)
AuLion Energy Candy	 The image shows the packaging for AuLion Energy Candy. At the top is a small red and white packet with the AuLion logo and a lion's face. Below it is a larger red box with the AuLion logo and the text 'Energy Candy'. The box also features a lion's face and the text 'AU-LION Natural Herbs Lab' and '6PCS'.	Sildenafil (PDE-5 inhibitor)	Australia Therapeutic Goods Administration
Beauche Clarifying Solution	 The image shows two bottles of Beauche Clarifying Solution. The bottle on the left is red with a white cap and has the text 'Beauche CLARIFYING SOLUTION' and 'Helps remove Pimples Skin Whitening'. The bottle on the right is white with a red cap and has the text 'Beauche CLARIFYING SOLUTION' and 'Helps remove Pimples Skin Whitening'. Both bottles have a warning label that says 'EXTERNAL USE ONLY'.	Hydroquinone and Tretinoin	The Philippines Food and Drug Administration
Deeja Cosmetics Laika Cream	 The image shows two jars of Deeja Cosmetics Laika Cream. The jar on the left is white with an orange lid and has the text 'Deeja Cosmetics' and 'LAIKA CREAM'. The jar on the right is white with an orange lid and has the text 'Deeja Cosmetics LAIKA CREAM' and 'HYPOALLERGENIC'.	Mercury	Malaysia National Pharmaceutical Agency

Name of product	Picture of product	Potent ingredient(s)	Source (Regulatory Agency)
Deeja Cosmetics Zulai Cream		Hydroquinone	Malaysia National Pharmaceutical Agency
Deeja Cosmetics Yus Cream		Hydroquinone	Malaysia National Pharmaceutical Agency
Dnars Luvee Cream (Normal and Sensitif)		Hydroquinone	Malaysia National Pharmaceutical Agency
Dnars Gold Lifthing Serum (Night)		Mercury	Malaysia National Pharmaceutical Agency
MS Skinz Night Cream		Mercury	Malaysia National Pharmaceutical Agency

Name of product	Picture of product	Potent ingredient(s)	Source (Regulatory Agency)
Morrison® Elbow & Knee Collagen + Whitening Body Lotion		Hydroquinone	The Philippines Food and Drug Administration
Qeziger Age-locking Recharging Spot A.M Cream		Mercury	Malaysia National Pharmaceutical Agency
Sparkle Beauty Cream		Hydroquinone, Tretinoin & Betamethasone 17-Valerate (Corticosteroid)	Malaysia National Pharmaceutical Agency
Sparkle Sun Day Cream		Mercury	Malaysia National Pharmaceutical Agency

Name of product	Picture of product	Potent ingredient(s)	Source (Regulatory Agency)
The Original Porcelana® Astringent Improved Formula		Hydroquinone and Tretinoin	The Philippines Food and Drug Administration
The Original 3 Bullets Capsules		Yohimbine	Australia Therapeutic Goods Administration



Name of product	Picture of product	Potent ingredient(s)	Source (Regulatory Agency)
Unlabelled cream by Hong Kong Chinese medicine practitioner (CMP), KU Chu-yu		Clobetasol propionate (Corticosteroid), Terbinafine and Miconazole	Hong Kong Department of Health
V-MAX Herbal Tablets		Sildenafil (PDE-5 inhibitor)	Australia Therapeutic Goods Administration

## **Annex B**

### **The possible side effects of the potent ingredients**

#### **Corticosteroids - Betamethasone 17-Valerate and Clobetasol propionate**

Betamethasone 17-Valerate and Clobetasol propionate are potent steroids that are usually prescribed for inflammatory conditions and should only be used under strict medical supervision. Long-term unsupervised use of steroids (including topical use where the steroid can be absorbed into the body) can cause increased blood glucose levels (which may lead to diabetes), high blood pressure, cataracts, muscular and bone disorders, an increased risk of infections and Cushing's syndrome (a round face or 'moon face' appearance and upper body obesity with thin limbs). Discontinuation of steroids without proper medical supervision can cause serious withdrawal symptoms such as fatigue, confusion and low blood pressure, especially when the product has been taken for more than a few weeks.

#### **Hydroquinone**

Hydroquinone is a potent ingredient used in prescription medicines for the treatment of skin conditions. The ingredient is prohibited in skincare cosmetic products and should only be used under medical supervision, as hydroquinone may cause harmful effects if not used properly. The inappropriate use of hydroquinone could result in changes in skin colour and hypersensitivity reactions such as rashes, redness, tingling and burning of skin.

#### **Mercury**

Mercury is a toxic substance and is prohibited for use as an ingredient in cosmetic products. Regular application of creams containing mercury could lead to rash, skin discolouration and blotching. Chronic exposure to very high levels of mercury in cosmetic products may also cause toxic effects to the kidneys, digestive and nervous system, as it can be absorbed through the skin. This could lead to organ damage.

#### **Miconazole**

Miconazole is a medicine used to treat fungal infections. Side effects from inappropriate use of creams containing miconazole include burning, stinging, swelling, irritation, redness and flaking of the skin.

#### **Phosphodiesterase Type 5 (PDE-5) inhibitors**

This is a class of medicine that includes sildenafil and tadalafil. These medicines can cause serious side effects such as strokes, heart attacks, decreased or loss of vision and hearing and priapism (painful and exceedingly long erections). If priapism is not treated immediately, it may lead to permanent impotence. PDE-5 inhibitors are also not suitable for patients with medical conditions such as certain heart-related problems or who are on heart medications such as nitrates. Deaths of patients found to be using sildenafil (PDE-5 inhibitor) while on nitrates have been reported overseas.

## **Terbinafine**

Terbinafine is a medicine used to treat fungal infections. Side effects associated with inappropriate use of creams containing terbinafine include skin peeling, itching, redness, and burning.

## **Tretinoin**

Tretinoin is a potent ingredient used in prescription medicines for the treatment of skin conditions and should be used under medical supervision. The ingredient is prohibited in skincare cosmetic products. Inappropriate use of tretinoin could lead to side effects such as redness and peeling of skin.

## **Yohimbine**

Yohimbine is a potent medicinal ingredient. Side effects associated with yohimbine include insomnia, anxiety, palpitations (sensation of heart pounding, racing or skipped beats), sweating and blurred vision. Overdosage can cause low blood pressure, rapid heartbeats, seizures, paralysis and coma. Deaths from overdose have also been reported.