



HSA updates on products found overseas that contain potent ingredients (April 2022)

The Health Sciences Authority (HSA) would like to update the public on products that have been found and reported by overseas regulators in August 2022 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.

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)
<p>AMBI® Fade Cream Oily Skin</p>		<p>Hydroquinone</p>	<p>United States Food and Drug Administration</p>
<p>AMBI® SKINCARE Fade Cream Normal Skin</p>		<p>Hydroquinone</p>	<p>United States Food and Drug Administration</p>

Name of product	Picture of product	Potent ingredient(s)	Source (Regulatory Agency)
Artri King		Diclofenac and Dexamethasone	United States Food and Drug Administration
BEST Age Spot Remover Lightening Perfection Crème		Hydroquinone	United States Food and Drug Administration

Name of product	Picture of product	Potent ingredient(s)	Source (Regulatory Agency)
<p>Cicatricure® MEDICAL LIGHTENING SKIN LIGHTENING CREAM</p>	 <p>The image shows the packaging for Cicatricure Medical Lightening Skin Lightening Cream. It features a central image of a woman's face with a grid overlay, and text in both English and Spanish. The English text includes 'SKIN LIGHTENING CREAM', '3 TECHNOLOGIES COMBINED', and 'HYDROQUINONE 2%'. The Spanish text includes 'CREMA ACLARADORA' and '3 TECNOLOGÍAS COMBINADAS'. The packaging also contains detailed drug facts and warnings.</p>	<p>Hydroquinone</p>	<p>United States Food and Drug Administration</p>
<p>Clinical Formula Bleaching Lotion</p>	 <p>The image shows a white plastic bottle of Clinical Formula Bleaching Lotion. The label is blue and white, with the text 'Bleaching Lotion', 'Corrective Skin Care System', '17 BLEACHING LOTION Skin Lightener', and 'Net Content 2 fl. oz.'.</p>	<p>Hydroquinone</p>	<p>United States Food and Drug Administration</p>

Name of product	Picture of product	Potent ingredient(s)	Source (Regulatory Agency)
Cougar Secret Honey VIP		Sildenafil (PDE-5 inhibitor)	United States Food and Drug Administration
Dark Spot Fix	Not available	Hydroquinone	United States Food and Drug Administration
Dexamethasone Acetate Cream		Dexamethasone	Health Canada
eb5® Skin Lightening Cream	Not available	Hydroquinone	United States Food and Drug Administration
ETUMAX VIP Royal Honey		Sildenafil and Tadalafil (PDE-5 inhibitors)	United States Food and Drug Administration

Name of product	Picture of product	Potent ingredient(s)	Source (Regulatory Agency)
Erkexin		Sildenafil (PDE-5 inhibitor)	United States Food and Drug Administration
Erythromycin Eye Ointment		Erythromycin	Health Canada
Helmi's Honey VIP		Tadalafil (PDE-5 inhibitor)	United States Food and Drug Administration
HoneyGizer™		Sildenafil (PDE-5 inhibitor)	United States Food and Drug Administration

Name of product	Picture of product	Potent ingredient(s)	Source (Regulatory Agency)
Kangaroo Ultra 3000		Sildenafil (PDE-5 inhibitor)	Health Canada
Medcare Golden Royal Honey		Tadalafil (PDE-5 inhibitor)	United States Food and Drug Administration

Name of product	Picture of product	Potent ingredient(s)	Source (Regulatory Agency)
Ortiga Mas Ajo Rey		Diclofenac	United States Food and Drug Administration
Ortiga Mas Ajo Rey Extra Forte		Diclofenac, Dexamethasone and Methocarbamol	United States Food and Drug Administration
Pink Pussycat Capsules		Sildenafil (PDE-5 inhibitor)	United States Food and Drug Administration

Name of product	Picture of product	Potent ingredient(s)	Source (Regulatory Agency)
Plexaderm® Skincare Dark Spot Fade Gel		Hydroquinone	United States Food and Drug Administration
PORELANA Day Skin Lightening Cream		Hydroquinone	United States Food and Drug Administration
Secret Miracle Honey		Sildenafil (PDE-5 inhibitor)	United States Food and Drug Administration

Name of product	Picture of product	Potent ingredient(s)	Source (Regulatory Agency)
skinauthority® Hyperpigmentation Treatment		Hydroquinone	United States Food and Drug Administration
SKINPRO ULTRA Brightener Hydroquinone	Not available	Hydroquinone	United States Food and Drug Administration
Tadalafil Tablets		Tadalafil (PDE-5 inhibitor)	Health Canada

Name of product	Picture of product	Potent ingredient(s)	Source (Regulatory Agency)
<p>teatrical® PROACLARANT SKIN LIGHTENING NIGHT CREAM</p>		<p>Hydroquinone</p>	<p>United States Food and Drug Administration</p>
<p>Vital Honey</p>		<p>Tadalafil (PDE-5 inhibitor)</p>	<p>United States Food and Drug Administration</p>

Name of product	Picture of product	Potent ingredient(s)	Source (Regulatory Agency)
X Rated Honey For Men		Tadalafil (PDE-5 inhibitor)	United States Food and Drug Administration
24K Rhino		Sildenafil (PDE-5 inhibitor)	Australian Therapeutic Goods Administration

Annex B

The possible side effects of the potent ingredients

Dexamethasone

Dexamethasone is a potent steroid that is usually prescribed for inflammatory conditions and should only be used under strict medical supervision. Long term use of an oral steroid without medical supervision can cause high blood pressure, cataracts, an increased risk of infections, and Cushing's syndrome (characterised by the appearance of round face or 'moon face' 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.

Diclofenac

Diclofenac is a potent painkiller and may potentially cause cardiovascular events such as heart attacks and strokes, as well as serious gastric bleeding, when used for a prolonged period. It should be used under close medical supervision, especially in patients with underlying heart conditions, stomach bleeding and ulceration.

Erythromycin

Erythromycin is an antibiotic used to treat bacterial infections. It is a prescription medicine and should be used under medical supervision. The inappropriate use of erythromycin may lead to stomach pain, diarrhoea, nausea and vomiting.

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.

Methocarbamol

Methocarbamol is a medicine used to treat acute, painful musculoskeletal spasms. Common side effects include headaches, sleepiness and dizziness. Serious side effects may include anaphylaxis, liver problems, confusion and seizures.

Phosphodiesterase Type 5 (PDE-5) inhibitors

This class of medicine 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.