



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**HEALTH SCIENCES AUTHORITY  
PRESS RELEASE  
6 MARCH 2017**

## **HSA ALERT: ‘ANYANG HERBAL’ PRODUCTS SOLD ONLINE CONTAINED VERY HIGH LEVELS OF BANNED SUBSTANCE AND CAUSED ADVERSE REACTIONS IN CONSUMER**

The Health Sciences Authority (HSA) is alerting members of the public not to purchase or consume ‘Anyang Herbal Blue’ and ‘Anyang Herbal Red’. Both products were marketed as weight loss products, and were sold online and through direct selling. Although labelled as containing “100% natural ingredients”, they were tested by HSA and found to contain very high levels of a banned substance, sibutramine. In addition, ‘Anyang Herbal Red’ was tested to contain undeclared potent western medicines: diclofenac (a painkiller) and phenolphthalein (a laxative). Please refer to **Annex A** for pictures of the products and **Annex B** for the possible adverse effects of undeclared potent ingredients found in these products.

2 ‘Anyang Herbal Blue’ was also touted to have “no side effects”. Contrary to this claim, a female consumer in her late 20s complained of heart palpitations, nausea, trembling of hands and legs, sweating, insomnia and illusions after consuming it.

3 HSA’s investigations revealed that the seller (Jessie Cosmetics) sold the products on a social media platform, as well as directly to her friends. HSA had directed immediate cessation of the sale of the product following detection of the undeclared potent ingredients. The seller is currently assisting in HSA’s investigation.

### **High levels of banned substance sibutramine found**

4 Sibutramine was previously available as a prescription-only weight loss drug but has been withdrawn from Singapore since 2010, due to an increased risk of heart attacks and strokes. Other possible serious adverse effects include high blood pressure, irregular heartbeats, hallucinations and mood swings.

5 Based on the labelled dosing instructions of ‘Anyang Herbal Blue’ and ‘Anyang Herbal Red’, a consumer would be consuming as high as eight times the maximum allowable amount of sibutramine per day. These dangerously high levels of sibutramine would predispose consumers to serious adverse effects. In the past, several consumers have reported experiencing hallucinations or hearing voices,

palpitations and breathlessness after consuming products containing high levels of sibutramine.<sup>1</sup>

### **Consumer advisory**

6 Members of the public are advised to:

- Stop taking 'Anyang Herbal Blue' and 'Anyang Herbal Red' immediately, and consult a doctor if you feel unwell or are concerned about your health.
- Exercise caution when purchasing health products online. Anyone can be a seller on these e-commerce platforms. You cannot be certain where and how these products were made. They could potentially be counterfeits or adulterated with undeclared potent ingredients which can seriously harm your health.
- Be wary of health products that promise quick and miraculous results or carry exaggerated claims like "100% natural ingredients", "no side effects" or "100% safe".

Additionally, members of the public are encouraged to visit [www.healthdangers.sg](http://www.healthdangers.sg) to learn more about the dangers of buying illegal health products from dubious sources.

### **Sale and supply of illegal products**

7 Sellers must stop selling 'Anyang Herbal Blue' and 'Anyang Herbal Red' immediately. They are warned that it is illegal to sell and supply complementary health products (e.g.: health supplements, traditional medicines) containing undeclared potent western medicines or banned substances.

8 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.

9 Members of the public who have any information on the sale and supply of 'Anyang Herbal Blue', 'Anyang Herbal Red' or other 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](mailto:hsa_is@hsa.gov.sg).

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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 and Applied Sciences, to protect and advance national health and safety. HSA is a multidisciplinary authority. It serves as the national regulator for health

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<sup>1</sup>[http://www.hsa.gov.sg/content/hsa/en/News\\_Events/Press\\_Releases/2014/TwoIllegalWeightLossProducts.html](http://www.hsa.gov.sg/content/hsa/en/News_Events/Press_Releases/2014/TwoIllegalWeightLossProducts.html)

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](http://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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**'Anyang Herbal Blue'**



**'Anyang Herbal Red'**



## **ANNEX B**

### **Possible adverse effects of undeclared western medicines found in the illegal products**

<b>Undeclared Ingredients</b>	<b>Possible Adverse Reactions</b>
Sibutramine	Sibutramine, previously a prescription-only weight loss drug used in the treatment of obesity, has been disallowed for sale in Singapore since 2010 due to increased risk of heart attacks and strokes. The use of sibutramine has been associated with serious adverse effects, including high blood pressure, irregular heartbeats, hallucinations and mood swings.
Diclofenac	Diclofenac is a potent painkiller and may potentially cause serious gastric bleeding, as well as cardiovascular events such as heart attacks and stroke when used for a prolonged period. It should be used under close medical supervision, especially in patients with underlying heart conditions.
Phenolphthalein	Phenolphthalein was used as a laxative in the past, but has not been registered in Singapore since 2011. Phenolphthalein may cause rashes, abdominal cramps, breathing difficulties, kidney disorders and has been found in animal studies to be associated with cancer.