FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



HEALTH SCIENCES AUTHORITY PRESS RELEASE 14 OCTOBER 2020

HSA ALERT: 'MONE MACHA COCOA' FOUND TO CONTAIN BANNED SUBSTANCE SIBUTRAMINE

The Health Sciences Authority (HSA) is alerting members of the public not to purchase or consume 'Mone Macha Cocoa', a slimming product that comes in the form of a chewable tablet and is marketed on multiple e-commerce platforms. HSA's analysis revealed that it contained sibutramine, a banned substance which can cause serious adverse effects in consumers. Please refer to <u>Annex A</u> for photos of the product.

CONSUMER EXPERIENCED ADVERSE EFFECTS AFTER TAKING 'MONE MACHA COCOA'

HSA received feedback from two members of the public regarding the product. The first had consumed the product and experienced extreme thirst and rapid heartbeat. The second suspected that the product may contain potent ingredients based on the claims made. 'Mone Macha Cocoa' was marketed to have the ability to "decrease fat absorption" and "increase fat metabolism". It was also labelled to contain natural fruit and vegetable ingredients. However, HSA tested the product to contain the banned substance sibutramine.

3 Sibutramine was previously a prescription-only weight loss medicine in Singapore. It was banned in 2010 due to an increased risk of heart attack and strokes. Other serious adverse effects reported by consumers who took products adulterated with sibutramine include rapid heartbeat, insomnia, hallucinations and hearing voices.

4 HSA has issued warnings to the sellers and the respective website administrators are collaborating with HSA to take down the affected listings of the product. 'Mone Macha Cocoa' was sold on local e-commerce platforms such as Carousell, Lazada, Shopee and Qoo10, and social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram.

ADVISORY TO CONSUMERS

- 5 Consumers are advised to:
 - Stop taking 'Mone Macha Cocoa' immediately and consult a doctor if you feel unwell or are concerned about your health.
 - Be wary of products that carry exaggerated weight loss claims or deliver unexpectedly quick effects. They could contain potent ingredients that can seriously harm your health. Do not trust online product reviews, as these testimonials usually cannot be verified.
 - There is no quick and easy way to lose weight. Weight control should be achieved through a combination of balanced diet and appropriate exercise. If you need help managing your weight, please consult your doctor, dietitian or a healthcare professional.

ADVISORY TO SELLERS AND SUPPLIERS

6 All sellers and suppliers must stop selling this product immediately. It is illegal to sell and supply products which contain banned substances. Sellers and suppliers are liable to prosecution and if convicted, may be imprisoned for up to 2 years and/or fined up to \$10,000.

7 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.

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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 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 <u>www.twitter.com/HSAsg</u>.

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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PICTURES OF 'MONE MACHA COCOA'









