

# DH investigates illegal online sale of slimming product containing banned and controlled drug ingredients (with photo)

â€‹The Department of Health (DH) today (May 23) is investigating a case of illegal sale of a slimming product containing banned and undeclared controlled drug ingredients on the Internet. Members of the public are urged not to buy or consume the product concerned (see photo).

Acting upon intelligence, the DH purchased a slimming product from a social media platform for analysis. Laboratory test results revealed that the sample of the product contained sibutramine and frusemide, which are Part 1 poisons under the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance (Cap. 138) (PPO).

Sibutramine was once used as an appetite suppressant. Since November 2010, pharmaceutical products containing sibutramine have been banned for use and sale in Hong Kong due to an increased cardiovascular risk. Frusemide is used for the treatment of heart diseases, and its side effects include low blood pressure and electrolyte imbalance. Medicines containing frusemide should be used under a doctor's direction and be supplied on the premises of an Authorized Seller of Poisons (i.e. pharmacy) under the supervision of a registered pharmacist upon a doctor's prescription.

The package of the product is labelled with the words "Good health is over wealth" but did not have a product name. It is suspected to be an unregistered pharmaceutical product. The DH will continue to follow up and investigate the case.

According to the PPO, all pharmaceutical products must be registered with the Pharmacy and Poisons Board of Hong Kong before they can be sold in the market. Illegal sale or possession of unregistered pharmaceutical products or Part 1 poisons are criminal offences. The maximum penalty for each offence upon conviction is a fine of \$100,000 and two years' imprisonment.

The DH strongly urged members of the public not to buy or consume products of doubtful composition or from unknown sources. All registered pharmaceutical products should carry a Hong Kong registration number on the package in the format of "HK-XXXXX". The safety, quality and efficacy of unregistered pharmaceutical products are not guaranteed.

People who have purchased the products concerned should stop consuming them immediately and consult healthcare professionals if in doubt or if they feel unwell after consumption. They may submit the products to the Drug Office of the DH at Room 1804-06, 18/F, Wing On Kowloon Centre, 345 Nathan

Road, Kowloon, during office hours for disposal.

Weight control should be achieved through a balanced diet and appropriate exercise. The public should consult healthcare professionals before consuming any medication for weight control. They may visit the website of the Drug Office of the DH for "[Health message on overweight problem and slimming products](#)" and "[Slimming products with undeclared Western drug ingredients](#)" for information.

