

Public urged not to buy or consume unlabelled slimming products with controlled ingredients (with photo)

The Department of Health (DH) today (February 25) appealed to the public not to buy or consume unlabelled slimming products that may contain controlled medicine ingredients and might be dangerous to health.

Acting upon intelligence, it was found that someone was offering for sale via a social media platform various unlabelled slimming products claiming to be imported from overseas. Samples of the above products were purchased for analysis and the test results from the Government Laboratory revealed that the samples contained ephedrine, fluoxetine, hydrochlorothiazide and topiramate, which are Part 1 poisons under the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance (Cap. 138).

During a joint operation conducted with the Police today, a 27-year-old man was arrested by the Police for illegal possession of Part 1 poisons and unregistered pharmaceutical products. The DH's investigation is continuing.

Ephedrine is usually used for the treatment of nasal congestion and its side effects include anxiety, headache, insomnia and nausea. Hydrochlorothiazide is used for the treatment of hypertension and its side effects include low blood pressure and electrolyte imbalance. Fluoxetine is used for treatment of mood disorder and may cause hallucination and insomnia. Topiramate is used for treatment of seizures and prophylaxis of migraines and may cause cognitive-related dysfunction, and neuropsychiatric abnormalities.

According to the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance, all pharmaceutical products must be registered with the Pharmacy and Poisons Board of Hong Kong before they can be legally 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 is a fine of \$100,000 and two years' imprisonment.

The DH spokesman strongly urged members of the public not to buy products of unknown or doubtful composition, or to consume products from unknown sources. Members of the public who have purchased the above products should stop consuming them immediately. They should consult healthcare professionals for advice if feeling unwell after consumption.

The spokesman added that weight control should be achieved through a balanced diet and appropriate exercise. The public should consult healthcare professionals before using 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 "[Information on slimming products with undeclared Western drug ingredients](#)" for more information.

The public may submit the products to the Drug Office of the DH at Room 1801, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, during office hours for disposal.



Terms of non-permanent CFA judges extended

The following is issued on behalf of the Judiciary:

The Chief Executive has accepted the recommendation of the Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal to extend the terms of office of three non-permanent judges from other common law jurisdictions of the Court of Final Appeal for a period of three years commencing March 1, 2021:

The Honourable Mr Justice Murray Gleeson
The Right Honourable the Lord Neuberger of Abbotsbury
The Right Honourable the Lord Walker of Gestingthorpe

The Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal Ordinance provides for a list of non-permanent Hong Kong judges and a list of judges from other common law jurisdictions. The term of appointment of such judges is three years. That term may be extended for one or more periods of three years by the Chief Executive acting in accordance with the recommendation of the Chief Justice.

Temporary closure of Shing Mun Valley Sports Ground

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) announced today (February 25) that Shing Mun Valley Sports Ground in Tsuen Wan District will be temporarily closed from March 1 to September 1 for resurfacing works for the running track. During the closure period, the public may use similar facilities managed by the LCSD.

For the most up-to-date closure schedule of the above leisure and sports facility, the public may refer to the notices at the venue or contact venue staff directly.

Record of Discussion of the Meeting of the Exchange Fund Advisory Committee Currency Board Sub-Committee held on January 13

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

(Approved for Issue by the Exchange Fund Advisory Committee on January 29)

Report on Currency Board Operations (October 14 – December 31 2020)

The Sub-Committee noted that the Hong Kong dollar (HKD) exchange rate remained firm and traded within a narrow range of 7.7500 – 7.7544 against the US dollar during the review period. The strong-side Convertibility Undertaking was triggered 20 times from October 14 to October 28. This was underpinned by equity-related demand including the southbound Stock Connect and initial public offering (IPO) activities. Along with the expansion of the Aggregate Balance to HK\$457.47 billion, the short-term HKD interbank interest rates remained soft throughout the review period, with occasional pickups driven by IPO funding demand. Overall, the HKD exchange and interbank markets continued to operate in a smooth and orderly manner.

The Sub-Committee noted that the Monetary Base increased to HK\$2,099.31 billion at the end of the review period. In accordance with the Currency Board principles, all changes in the Monetary Base had been fully matched by corresponding changes in foreign reserves.

The Report on Currency Board Operations for the review period is at Annex.

Monitoring of Risks and Vulnerabilities

The Sub-Committee noted that global equity markets reached new highs as COVID-19 vaccine breakthroughs, greater clarity in the US presidential election results, and a new round of US fiscal stimulus fuelled investors' risk appetite despite the concern over virus mutation. Nevertheless, the rampant spread of COVID-19 continued to weigh on the near-term economic outlook in the EU and the US. The persistent disconnect of financial markets from the real economy could make financial markets more susceptible to volatility. Moreover, geopolitical risks would continue to overshadow financial markets.

The Sub-Committee further noted that global policymakers continue to face the difficult task of timing and tailoring exit from the massive anti-epidemic support measures. At the same time, policymakers need to be mindful of the longer-term costs, such as rising government debts and delaying the necessary resource reallocation in the post-COVID world.

The Sub-Committee noted that Hong Kong's economy picked up sequentially in the third quarter of 2020. However, downside risks to economic growth intensified amid the fourth wave of local infections, as well as the tightening of social distancing measures and travel restrictions. Against the backdrop of a still weak economic environment, the labour market would remain under pressure, while inflationary pressures should stay mild in the near term. As for the housing market, activity had shown signs of softening since late November.

An Assessment of Inflation-at-Risk in the US

The Sub-Committee noted a paper which examined tail risks to US inflation using the "Inflation at Risk" methodology. The paper underscored the importance of keeping inflation anchored and served as a reminder of the potential stagflationary impact of de-globalisation.

[Appointment of Research Grants Council Chairman](#)

The Government announced today (February 25) that the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, has appointed Professor Wong Yuk-shan as Chairman

of the Research Grants Council (RGC) for a term of three years with effect from March 1, 2021.

Professor Wong is an expert in environmental biotechnology, plant biochemistry and mangrove conservation/utilisation. He is the President of the Open University of Hong Kong and has extensive experience in teaching, research and administrative work at a number of universities. He has a distinguished public service record, notably as the current Chairman of the New Energy Transport Fund Steering Committee and Chairman of the Standing Committee on Judicial Salaries and Conditions of Service. He was also a member of the University Grants Committee (UGC) between 2005 and 2011.

"Professor Wong is a dedicated educator who has devoted himself to public service and contributed significantly to the development of the post-secondary education sector. With his ample experience in university administration and academic research, I am confident that Professor Wong will continue to strengthen the vibrant research culture in academia and foster closer collaboration between the RGC and other research bodies on the Mainland and overseas, leading the RGC to scale new heights," Mr Yeung said.

Mr Yeung thanked Professor Joseph Lee Hun-wei, the outgoing RGC Chairman, for his support and contributions, and wished him every success in his new position as the President of the Macau University of Science and Technology.

The RGC advises the Government, through the UGC, on the needs of Hong Kong's higher education institutions in the field of academic research and on the distribution of funding for academic research projects undertaken by academic staff of higher education institutions. The RGC manages a variety of research funding programmes, including the General Research Fund, the Early Career Scheme, the Collaborative Research Fund, the Research Impact Fund, the Theme-based Research Scheme, the Areas of Excellence Scheme and various Joint Research Schemes. It has set up committees and subject panels to assess research bids in various disciplines, such as biology and medicine, business studies, engineering, humanities and social sciences, and physical sciences. It also manages a number of fellowship schemes, including the Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme and the RGC Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme.