

衛生署藥物辦公室
藥物註冊及進出口管制部

香港九龍南昌街 382 號公共衛生檢測中心三樓

2319 8458



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
DRUG OFFICE
DRUG REGISTRATION AND
IMPORT/EXPORT CONTROL DIVISION
3/F., Public Health Laboratory Centre,
382 Nam Cheong Street, Kowloon, Hong Kong

電話號碼 Tel. No.:

詢問處 Enquiries (852) 2319 8458

傳真號碼 Faxline No. (852) 2803 4962

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(IN REPLY PLEASE QUOTE THIS FILE REF.)

Dear Healthcare Professionals,

Rare cases of serious burns with the use of over-the-counter topical muscle and joint pain relievers

Your attention is drawn to that the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced that rare cases of serious burns have been reported to occur on the skin where over-the-counter (OTC) topical muscle and joint pain relievers were applied. And some of the burns had serious complications requiring hospitalization. These products contain the active ingredients menthol, methyl salicylate, or capsaicin.

In many cases, the burns occurred after only one application of the OTC topical muscle and joint pain reliever, with severe burning or blistering occurring within 24 hours of the first application. Based on the reported cases, the majority of second- and third-degree burns occurred with the use of products containing menthol as the single active ingredient and products containing both menthol and methyl salicylate, in concentrations greater than 3% menthol and 10% methyl salicylate. Few cases reported using a capsaicin-containing product.

FDA advised that healthcare professionals should counsel patients about how to use the products appropriately, inform them about the risk of serious harms and advise them to discontinue using the product if experience adverse events, when recommending OTC topical muscle and joint pain relievers to patients.

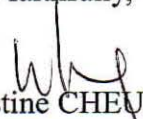
Please refer to FDA's website for details:

<http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/DrugSafety/ucm318858.htm>

In Hong Kong, there are some topical pharmaceutical products containing menthol and/or methyl salicylate registered for relieving muscle and joint pain. Most of them are non-prescription medicines. No relevant adverse drug reaction report was received by Department of Health. Healthcare professionals are advised to balance the risk of possible adverse effects against the benefit of treatment.

Please report any adverse events caused by the drugs to the Pharmacovigilance Unit of Department of Health (tel. no.: 2319 2920, fax: 2147 0457 or email: adr@dh.gov.hk). For details, please refer to the website at Drug Office under "ADR Reporting": <http://www.drugoffice.gov.hk/adr.html>. You may wish to visit the Drug Office's website for subscription and browsing of "Drug News" which is a monthly drug safety digest of drug safety news and information issued by Drug Office.

Yours faithfully,


(Ms. Christine CHEUNG)
for AD(D)

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