

## **Singapore: HSA Alert: Four products detected with potent undeclared ingredients; One consumer had a life-threatening event and severe heart failure**

The Health Sciences Authority (HSA) is alerting members of the public not to purchase or consume four products which have caused serious adverse reactions in consumers. One consumer lost consciousness and required resuscitation, and now suffers from severe heart failure. The products were tested by HSA to contain undeclared potent medicinal ingredients, including a banned substance for weight loss and a potent steroid. The four products are:

<b>Name of product</b>	<b>Undeclared potent ingredients in the product</b>	<b>Serious adverse reactions experienced by consumers</b>
BB Body	Sibutramine	Extremely fast heart rate, leading to loss in consciousness, and requiring resuscitation. Consumer now suffers from severe heart failure.
Bello Smaze	Sibutramine	Heart palpitations, insomnia and having suicidal thoughts
Choco Fit	Sibutramine	Heart palpitations
Seahorse Chop Du Zhong Ba Ji Wan	Dexamethasone, Chlorpheniramine, Frusemide	Cushing's syndrome

A woman in her 50s had purchased 'BB Body' from an online seller based in Malaysia after coming across an Instagram post of the product. After consuming it for about 3 months, she developed extremely fast heart rate (ventricular tachycardia), which led to a loss of consciousness, requiring resuscitation to save her life. As a result, she now suffers from severe heart failure, and is implanted with a defibrillator (device to regulate heart rhythm). She also requires long term heart failure medications. A woman in her 20s first developed palpitations and insomnia, and subsequently had suicidal thoughts, after taking 'Bello Smaze' for four days. She had purchased the product directly from a local seller to lose weight. According to the consumer, her friend who recommended the product also experienced palpitations and insomnia. Separately, another woman in her 30s experienced palpitations after consuming the product 'Choco Fit' for 2 days.

The adverse reactions experienced by these consumers were consistent with the effects from sibutramine, which was found in the three products. Sibutramine was previously a prescription drug but was banned by HSA in 2010 due to an increased risk of heart attacks and strokes, as well as other serious adverse effects.

'BB Body', 'Bello Smaze' and 'Choco Fit' were marketed on various e-commerce and social media platforms including Instagram and Facebook. They were marketed as having "no side effects" or being able to deliver fast weight loss within days. HSA has directed the administrators of the local online platforms to remove the affected product listings.

‘Seahorse Chop Du Zhong Ba Ji Wan’ was reported to cause Cushing’s syndrome in a man in his 40s. He had purchased the product from a medical hall in Johor Bahru, Malaysia, and took it for more than 2 months to relieve his arthritis. His condition, characterised by ‘moon’ face, thin limbs, thinning of the skin and easy bruising was caused by dexamethasone, a potent steroid that was fraudulently added into the product. Tests by HSA also found that the product contained chlorpheniramine (an antihistamine for allergic reactions). There was another sign that ‘Seahorse Chop Du Zhong Ba Ji Wan’ was an illegal product. The blister strips found in one box carried a different product name, labelled as ‘100% Natural Pure Herbal \* Acti Fast’. Tests conducted on the product showed that it contained an additional adulterant, frusemide (a potent medicine for removing excess water in the body). These findings are characteristic of illegal products which are manufactured without any quality control.

Please refer to the following website in HSA for details:

[http://www.hsa.gov.sg/content/hsa/en/News\\_Events/Press\\_Releases/2019/fourproductslifethreateningeventheartfailure.html](http://www.hsa.gov.sg/content/hsa/en/News_Events/Press_Releases/2019/fourproductslifethreateningeventheartfailure.html)

In Hong Kong, the above products are not registered pharmaceutical products.

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