

Slimming products found to contain banned Sibutramine

Difficulties in monitoring and enforcing laws regulating e-commerce activities have given rise to myriads of products with unsubstantiated claims like “drug-free”, “herb-based”, “natural”, “no side effects” and “additive-free” available for purchase online, leaving unsuspecting consumers in danger of having health problems.

The Department of Health in Hong Kong purchased a selection of slimming products from online vendors in late August and subsequently found Sibutramine, a banned substance in five of the product samples. Even after the authorities have taken action, such products containing Sibutramine were still widely available on different e-shopping platforms, putting consumers’ health and safety at risk.

Sibutramine is a Part 1 poison listed under the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance, which was used medically as an appetite suppressant in the past. It is also a stimulant to the central nervous system, which induces excitedness, and increased heart rate and blood pressure, thus increasing the risk of heart failure and cardiovascular diseases. The Department of Health has forbidden the use of such medication in the territory since November 2010, and any unauthorized possession of this Part 1 poison is an offence.

Below are the common drug adulterations found in slimming products and drugs for treating impotence:

Item	Drug adulteration	
Slimming products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sibutramine ● Phenolphthalein ● Phentermine ● Fenfluramine HCl 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Amfepramone ● Bisacodyl ● Ephedrine HCl ● Orlistat
Drugs for impotence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sildenafil Citrate (Trade name : Viagra) ● Tadalafil (Trade name : Cialis) ● Acetildenafil ● Aminotadalafil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Vardenafil (Trade name : Levitra) ● Yohimbine ● Testosterone ● Phentolamine Mesylate

STC (The Hong Kong Standards and Testing Centre), a not-for-profit, independent testing, inspection and certification organization with over 50 years of experience in consumer product testing, provides comprehensive chemical testing services for drug manufacturers, distributors and consumers, including testing for drug adulterations in slimming products and drugs for treating impotence.

For more information, please contact our Chemical, Food and Pharmaceutical Products Division.

Hong Kong Tel: +852 2666 1839 / 2666 1878 / 2666 1832

Fax: +852 2663 1284

E-mail: hkcfcd@stc.group

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