

[DH investigates suspected illegal sale and possession of unregistered proprietary Chinese medicine \(with photo\)](#)

The Department of Health (DH) is today (January 2) investigating a licensed manufacturer of proprietary Chinese medicine (pCm), Singapore Headway Medicine Co (Singapore Headway), at Wo Tong Tsui Street, Kwai Chung, New Territories, for its suspected illegal sale and possession of an unregistered pCm called "Singapore Headway Goldboss Jiann Wey Jeng Charng Pill" (batch numbers: 232491, 232492, 232493, 232494, 232495). It was found that the arsenic level in some samples had exceeded the limit imposed by Chinese Medicine Council of Hong Kong (CMCHK). Singapore Headway has arranged total recall of all batches of the related product.

Through market surveillance, the DH actively investigated and found the above mentioned product was an unregistered pCm. According to its label, the pCm is indicated for indigestion, gastrointestinal discomfort, vomiting, diarrhea and cold. Preliminary investigations revealed that Singapore Headway, the registration holder of the pCm, did not produce the concerned batches of pCm in designated manufacturer according to the registration with the CMCHK. Hence, the concerned batches of produce were suspected to be unregistered pCm. Furthermore, testing by the Government Laboratory revealed that some samples contained about 1.7 times the maximum permitted level of arsenic under the registration criteria of pCms imposed by CMCHK. Singapore Headway has arranged total recall of all batches of the related product.

The DH's investigation is on-going.

"Unregistered pCms may pose threats to public health as their safety, quality and efficacy are not proven. Arsenic is a heavy metal. While acute poisoning may cause severe vomiting, diarrhoea, confusion and coma, prolonged exposure can adversely affect the liver, kidney and heart. Young children are particularly vulnerable." a spokesman for the DH said.

Singapore Headway has set up a hotline (2407 1226) for related enquiries. The DH will closely monitor the recall.

According to section 119 of the Chinese Medicine Ordinance (Cap 549), no person shall sell, import or possess any pCm unless it is registered. The maximum penalty is a fine of \$100,000 and two years' imprisonment. The DH will seek advice from the Department of Justice on prosecution matters upon completion of the investigation, and will refer the case to the CMCHK for consideration of possible disciplinary action.

Members of the public who have purchased the above pCm should stop using it immediately. Those who have used the above pCm and feel unwell

should seek advice from healthcare professionals. People who have the above pCm may submit it to the DH's Chinese Medicine Regulatory Office on 16/F, AIA Kowloon Tower, Landmark East, 100 How Ming Street, Kwun Tong, during office hours for disposal.

