

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

The Department of Health (DH) today (May 6) 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 an unlabelled slimming product and claiming the product to be "Fat burning pills". Samples of the product were obtained for analysis and the Government Laboratory's results confirmed that the samples contained sibutramine, a Part 1 poison under the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance (Cap. 138). The DH's investigation is continuing.

Sibutramine was once used as an appetite suppressant. Since November 2010, products containing sibutramine have been banned in Hong Kong because of increased cardiovascular risk.

According to the 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 product should stop consuming it 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 product 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.

