

Woman arrested for suspected illegal sale and possession of slimming products with undeclared controlled and banned drug ingredient (with photo)

The Department of Health (DH) today (February 6) conducted an operation against the sale of two slimming products, namely HOTCHA Botanical Beverage Mix chocolate with Morosil and HOTCHA Botanical Beverage Mix Hazelnut Coffee with Morosil, which were found to contain an undeclared controlled and banned drug ingredient. During the operation, a 40-year-old woman was arrested by the Police for suspected illegal sale and possession of unregistered pharmaceutical products and Part 1 poisons.

Acting upon a public complaint, the DH obtained samples of the above products via an online platform for analysis. Test results from the Government Laboratory revealed that the samples contained sibutramine, which is a Part 1 poison under the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance (Cap. 138) (the Ordinance). The DH conducted an operation today and a 40-year-old woman selling the products concerned was arrested. The investigation is continuing.

Sibutramine was once used as an appetite suppressant. Since November 2010, pharmaceutical products containing sibutramine have been banned in Hong Kong because of an 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 products should stop consuming them 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 "[Slimming products with undeclared Western drug ingredients](#)" for information.

The public may submit the products 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.

