



HSA ALERT: “SETIA HERBA” DETECTED TO CONTAIN POTENT STEROIDS AND ANTI-INFLAMMATORY PAINKILLER

The Health Sciences Authority (HSA) is alerting members of the public not to purchase or use "Setia Herba" that was sold online. The product was labelled to contain “100% authentic herbs” which were “safe to eat”. However, HSA’s tests revealed that the product contained two potent steroids (dexamethasone and prednisolone) and an anti-inflammatory painkiller (diclofenac). Please refer to **Annex A** for photos of the product.

2 A member of the public experienced relief from pain in his knee after consuming “Setia Herba” purchased from a TikTok seller. His friend alerted HSA to the case. “Setia Herba” was marketed online as a “traditional health product solution” that is able to relieve multiple medical conditions including joint pain and gout. It was also marketed with a “laboratory test certificate” to deceive consumers into thinking that the product was tested to be safe. “Setia Herba” was also sold on local e-commerce platforms such as Shopee, Carousell and Lazada. HSA has worked with the platform administrators to remove listings of the product.

Harmful effects from unsupervised use of steroids and anti-inflammatory painkiller

3 Dexamethasone and prednisolone are potent steroids that are usually prescribed for inflammatory conditions and should only be used under strict medical supervision. Long-term unsupervised use of steroids can cause increased blood sugar levels which could lead to diabetes, high blood pressure, cataracts, muscular and bone disorders (including osteoporosis), an increased risk of infections and Cushing’s syndrome (a round face or ‘moon face’ appearance and upper body obesity with thin limbs). Discontinuation of steroids without proper medical supervision can lead to

steroid withdrawal effects and adrenal insufficiency (a serious steroid withdrawal condition, where the body does not produce adequate amounts of steroid hormones after stopping long-term steroid use). This may then cause fatigue, generalised weakness, muscle and joint pain, low blood pressure, fits or shock.

4 Diclofenac is a potent anti-inflammatory painkiller that may potentially cause serious gastric bleeding, as well as cardiovascular events such as heart attacks and stroke when used for a prolonged period. Diclofenac should be used under close medical supervision, especially in consumers with underlying heart conditions.

Advisory to consumers

5 Consumers are advised to be **ALERT** when purchasing health products:

- **AVOID** Dubious Products: Steer clear of products from unknown or unverified sources, especially online - they may contain harmful ingredients.
- **LOOK** for Reputable Sellers: Only purchase from trusted pharmacies or well-known retailers with an established presence in Singapore.
- **EXAMINE** Claims: Be cautious and wary of products that claim to have miraculous results, or “no side effects”.
- **REPORT** Suspicious Products: Help protect others by reporting dangerous or dubious products to HSA.
- **TRUST** Medical Advice: See a doctor immediately if you have used "Setia Herba". Do not stop taking it suddenly as it contains steroids and may cause severe withdrawal symptoms such as fatigue, confusion, and low blood pressure, especially when it has been taken for more than a few weeks.

Advisory to sellers and suppliers

6 All sellers and suppliers must stop selling "Setia Herba" immediately. HSA will not hesitate to take stern enforcement actions against anyone who sells and supplies products found to be adulterated with potent ingredients. Sellers and suppliers are liable to prosecution and if convicted, may be imprisoned for up to 2 years and/or fined up to \$10,000.

7 Members of the public who have any information on the sale and supply of illegal products may contact HSA's Enforcement Branch at Tel: 6866-3485 during office hours (Monday to Friday) or email: hsa_is@hsa.gov.sg.

**HEALTH SCIENCES AUTHORITY
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About the Health Sciences Authority (HSA)

The Health Sciences Authority (HSA) applies medical, pharmaceutical and scientific expertise through its three professional groups, Health Products Regulation, Blood Services and Applied Sciences, to protect and advance national health and safety. HSA is a multidisciplinary authority. It serves as the national regulator for health products, ensuring they are wisely regulated to meet standards of safety, quality and efficacy. As the national blood service, it is responsible for providing a safe and adequate blood supply. It also applies specialised scientific, forensic, investigative and analytical capabilities in serving the administration of justice. For more details, visit <http://www.hsa.gov.sg/>.

For more updates on public health and safety matters, follow us at www.twitter.com/HSAsq.

About HSA's Health Products Regulation Group

The Health Products Regulation Group (HPRG) of HSA ensures that medicines, innovative therapeutics, medical devices and health-related products are wisely regulated and meet appropriate safety, quality and efficacy standards. It contributes to the development of biomedical sciences in Singapore by administering a robust, scientific and responsive regulatory framework.

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Photos of "Setia Herba" tested by HSA

