

# CONSUMER ALERT!

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## Don't take drugs containing phenylpropanolamine'

Ministry says no evidence of PPA on market, but cautions consumers

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**THE Ministry of Health's Standard and Regulations Unit is encouraging consumers to beware of all drugs containing the ingredient phenylpropanolamine (PPA), even though it was banned from the country more than five years ago.**

Phenylpropanolamine is an ingredient used in prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) drug products such as a **nasal decongestant** to relieve stuffy nose or sinus congestion and in OTC weight control drug products to control appetite.

But according to Princess Thomas Osbourne, head of the Standard and Regulations Unit, the ingredient has been linked to cardio vascular side effects. However, she said checks up to three weeks ago indicated that there is no evidence of any drug with the PPA ingredient present in the island.

"We want to remind the public that they still need to check the ingredients list on the medications to ensure that it does not have phenylpropanolamine in it. If they find any drug with this ingredient then they should report to the ministry," said Osbourne. "It can have adverse effects on the heart, causing it to go out of rhythm," she added.

The US Food and Drug Agency (FDA) reported last year that in response to its request in November 2000, many companies had voluntarily reformulated their products to exclude PPA.

The FDA's Advisory Committee also confirmed a study done by scientists at Yale University School of Medicine, which determined that there was an

association between PPA and hemorrhagic stroke (bleeding into the brain or into tissue surrounding the brain).

This study reported that taking **PPA increased the risk of hemorrhagic stroke in women.** It said men may also be at risk, however, the risk of hemorrhagic stroke is very low.

PPA is most commonly found in OTC drugs such as appetite suppressant, dietary supplements, children's cold medicine, adult cold medicine, cold and flu medicine and cold and sinus effervescent.