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PRESS RELEASE

THE SAFETY OF COUGH AND COLD MEDICINES IN CHILDREN

The Medicines Control Council (MCC) of South Africa wishes to alert the public that oral cough and cold medicines containing the following ingredients should not be used in children under the age of two years due to safety concerns:

- *brompheniramine,*
- *chlorpheniramine,*
- *dextromethorphan,*
- *diphenhydramine,*
- *ephedrine,*
- *guaifenesin,*
- *ipecacuanha,*
- *phenylephrine,*
- *pholcodine and*
- *pseudoephedrine*

These medicines have been found to cause significant side effects such as allergic reactions, hallucinations and sleep disturbances. Consult your healthcare professional as to which cough and cold medicine is suitable for your child.

The MCC urges parents and caregivers to heed the following warnings and advice before using cough and cold medicines in children:

- Cough and cold medicines should not be used in children under the age of two years.

For children **over** the age of two years

- The use of cough and cold medicines should only be used when recommended to do so a doctor or pharmacist. A healthcare professional should be consulted even if the product information in the package insert or patient information leaflet allows for its use in children.
- Do not to give more than one cough and cold medicine to a child as this could harm the child.
- Read the dosing instructions carefully to check that you are giving the correct dose recommended for the child's age and/or weight. Also do not use the medicine more often than is recommended.
- Ask a doctor or pharmacist for advice if you have questions about these medicines or are not sure how to use these medicines properly.
- Only use the measuring spoons or cups that come with the medicine or those made specially for measuring medicines. Do not use common household spoons to measure medicines for children because they are usually not accurate and can lead to incorrect dosing.

- These medicines should be stored out of the reach of children.
- It is important to understand that cough and cold medicines do not treat the cause of the symptoms and do not shorten the length of time your child is ill. They only relieve some symptoms.
- If symptoms persist beyond a few days or worsen, this may suggest a more serious problem that needs to be assessed by a doctor.

Parents and caregivers are urged to report any problems they experience when using medicines in children to their doctor or pharmacist.

Respectfully

Ms Mandisa Hela
Registrar of Medicines