17 Muswell Road South, Block D,
Wedgefield, Phase 2,
Bryanston, Johannesburg,
2191, South Africa
Tel: +27 (0) 11 745 6000
haleon.com

IMPORTANT MEDICINE SAFETY INFORMATION

Pseudoephedrine-containing medicines – Risks of posterior reversible encephalopathy syndrome (PRES) and reversible cerebral vasoconstriction syndrome (RCVS)

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Dear Healthcare professional,

Haleon South Africa (SA), in collaboration with the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) would like to inform you about the risks of posterior reversible encephalopathy syndrome (PRES) and reversible cerebral vasoconstriction syndrome (RCVS) associated with the use of pseudoephedrine-containing medicines.

Summary

- Cases of PRES and RCVS have been reported with the use of pseudoephedrine-containing medicines.
- Pseudoephedrine-containing medicines are contraindicated in patients with severe or uncontrolled hypertension, or with severe acute or chronic kidney disease or renal failure, as these conditions increase the risks of PRES or RCVS.
- Symptoms of PRES and RCVS include sudden severe headache or thunderclap headache, nausea, vomiting, confusion, seizures and/or visual disturbances.
- Patients should be advised to immediately stop using these medicines and seek medical assistance if signs or symptoms of PRES or RCVS develop.

Background on the safety concern

Pseudoephedrine is authorised, alone or in combination with other substances, for short-term symptomatic relief of nasal or sinus congestion caused by the common cold or allergic rhinitis <or vasomotor rhinitis><or aerotitis>.

PRES and RCVS

PRES also known as reversible posterior leukoencephalopathy syndrome (RPLS), is a rare condition in which parts of the brain are affected by swelling. This condition typically has an acute or subacute onset (hours to days) characterised by headaches and seizures; many people also experience visual changes, confusion and drowsiness, weakness of the arm and/or leg on one side of the body (hemiplegia), difficulty speaking. PRES is usually reversible; symptoms

cease within several days or weeks with the reduction of blood pressure and withdrawal of causative medicines.

RCVS, also known as Call-Fleming syndrome, is a rare condition characterised by thunderclap headache (severe pain peaking in seconds), typically bilateral, with posterior onset followed by diffuse pain frequently accompanied by nausea, vomiting, photophobia and phonophobia. Transient focal deficits can be present in some patients. Ischaemic and haemorrhagic stroke are the major complications of the syndrome.

There have been rare cases of PRES and RCVS reported in patients taking pseudoephedrine-containing medicines. Most reported cases resolved following discontinuation and appropriate treatment. No fatal cases of PRES or RCVS have been reported.

The Professional Information (PI) and Patient Information Leaflet (PIL) for pseudoephedrine-containing medicine/s below, will be updated to further describe the risks of PRES and RCVS and the potential risk factors for these conditions.

Advice for healthcare professionals to provide to patients:

- Pseudoephedrine-containing medicines are for short-term use only and should not be used for a prolonged or extended period.
- Healthcare professionals should warn patients about the risks and symptoms of PRES and RCVS associated with the use of pseudoephedrine-containing medicines.
- Patients should be alerted not to take pseudoephedrine-containing medicines if they have severe acute (sudden) or chronic (long-term) kidney disease or kidney failure, very high blood pressure (hypertension) or uncontrolled hypertension, as these conditions increase the risks of PRES or RCVS.
- Patients should be advised to immediately stop taking pseudoephedrine-containing medicines and seek urgent medical attention if they experience severe headache that develops very quickly or suddenly feel sick or are vomiting, confused or experiencing seizures or changes in vision.
- Healthcare professionals should encourage patients to use the PIL and seek medical advice from a doctor or pharmacist if they are unsure about the association of side effects they experience after taking pseudoephedrine-containing medicines with the risks of PRES and RCVS.

Advice for healthcare professionals:

- Healthcare professionals are alerted about the risks of PRES and RCVS (rare but serious conditions) associated with the use of pseudoephedrine-containing medicines. These conditions are reversible, patients typically fully recover within 3 months with early recognition and treatment.

- Pseudoephedrine-containing medicines are contraindicated in patients with severe or uncontrolled hypertension, or with severe acute or chronic kidney disease or renal failure, as these conditions increase the risks of PRES or RCVS.

- If a patient has developed PRES and RCVS with the use of pseudoephedrine-containing medicines, treatment must be withdrawn immediately and not restarted at any time. Furthermore, an alternative treatment should be considered, as appropriate.

- Healthcare professionals are urged to report any adverse drug reactions (ADRs) or product quality problems associated with the use of pseudoephedrine-containing medicine indicated below to SAHPRA by completing an ADR reporting form accessible via this link: https://www.sahpra.org.za/document/adverse-drug-reactions-and-quality-problem-reporting-form/ and email it to adr@sahpra.org.za.

- Alternatively, healthcare professionals may use the following eReporting link https://vigiflow-eforms.who-umc.org/za/ereporting.

- Additionally, reporting can be done via the Med Safety App. The App can be downloaded into a smart mobile phone through Google Play or App Store. For more information on Med Safety App, please use the following link: https://medsafety.sahpra.org.za/.

- For more information on ADR reporting of pseudoephedrine-containing medicine mentioned below, please contact the SAHPRA Pharmacovigilance unit at pvqueries@sahpra.org.za or Haleon SA at +27 11 745 6051 or +27 72 889 2763.

Haleon SA's pseudoephedrine-containing medicine

PRODUCT	ACTIVE INGREDIENT	REGISTRATION NUMBER	MARKETING STATUS
Advil Cold and Sinus	Each tablet contains: Ibuprofen 200 mg Pseudoephedrine 30 mg	Z/5.8/248	Marketed

Yours sincerely,
Parthibaraja Aswathaman

Consumer Safety Science Manager – Physician
parthibaraja.x.aswathaman@haleon.com
+27 11 745 6000/1

Signature: *Electronically signed by: Papikie Lebelo South Africa (RSA)*
Reason: I am signing for the reasons as stated in the document.
Date: Jun 6, 2025 11:13 GMT+2

Email: papikie.j.lebelo@haleon.com