SKIN BLEACHING: FDA EDUCATES MARKET FOLKS IN WA ON ITS NEGATIVE EFFECTS

The Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) as part of its activities to ensure public health and safety, has organized a public education campaign at the Wa market in the Upper West Region of Ghana.

The campaign was to educate the market women and the general public on the negative effects of skin bleaching and the dangers associated with the use of cosmetic products that contain hydroquinone. This campaign was to help remind persons within the Wa Municipality of the ban on hydroquinone in cosmetic products as required by Ghana standards on cosmetic products (GS 227-2:2017).

During the interactions, officers of the FDA mentioned that, the negative health effects of the use of hydroquinone in cosmetic products, cannot be reversed and these effects can be linked with cases such as diabetes, hypertension, kidney disease, skin cancer (squamous cell carcinoma) and skin thinning. The other effects also include: Ochronosis (nensuoben), intertrigo, Mycosis, Striae (Stretch marks), and bad odour.

The market women were informed that while hydroquinone has appropriate medicinal value for fading hyper-pigmentation, acne marks, sun spots, etc, the appropriate use of hydroquinone in whitening creams, can lead to the reduction of melanin in one’s skin.

During the engagements, officers of the FDA also revealed some of the other names used in place of the hydroquinone on other cosmetic products. They include: Idrochinone, Quinol, 1,4-Dihydroxybenzene, Dihydrobenzene, 1,4-Hydroxybenzene and 1,4-Didroxybenzol. Adding to the list include: Phiaquin, Benzoquinol, Benzohydroquinone, P-Benzenediol, Hydroxyphenol and Tequinol. It can also be called Eldoquin forte, Derma-Blanch, Solaquin fort, Aida and ARTI.

The FDA has however intensified its nationwide Post Market Surveillance (PMS) and enforcement of the ban of hydroquinone in cosmetic products.
The directive on the zero (0) % hydroquinone in cosmetic products came into effect in 2006 (GS 227:2-2006) and was reviewed in 2017 (GS 227:2-2017) by the Ghana Standard Authority (GSA).

The FDA is therefore urging manufacturers and importers of cosmetic products not to add hydroquinone to the formulation of their products, and manufacturers who already have it in their products are being advised to reformulate and submit samples to the FDA for registration.