



**MINISTRY OF HEALTH,
WELLNESS AND THE
ENVIRONMENT**

**Ministerial Building, Kingstown,
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines**

PRESS STATEMENT

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Contact: Permanent Secretary
Kingstown, St. Vincent and the Grenadines

THE USE OF IVERMECTIN IN ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

In view of the international attention and ongoing debate regarding the drug Ivermectin being a potential “miracle drug” in the treatment or prevention of COVID-19, the Office of the Drug Inspector in a bid to promote the rational use of medicines through regulated importation as well as proper prescribing and dispensing of pharmaceutical products, advises the public to be wary of unproven claims of the drug’s viability in respect of the current pandemic.

While the United States Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) approved Ivermectin for use in humans in 1996 for the treatment of round worm and river blindness caused by a parasitic worm, and it is included on the WHO’s list of essential drugs for a country to have, its use in COVID-19 remains unauthorized as the science behind this use is largely inconclusive. Worldwide, Ivermectin has been used to treat roundworm infestations in humans and livestock.

National Regulatory Agencies are heeding the recommendation issued by the WHO that the drug be used only in clinical trials where the requisite monitoring and controls are in place. In St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the public should pay close attention to the fact that, so far, there is no indication to use Ivermectin as a patient or to prescribe it as a physician other than in an approved clinical trial. Veterinarians are also not expected to sell the animal version to people for the treatment of COVID-19 as this practice is illegal and potentially dangerous.

Pharmacists, must, before they dispense a prescription drug, examine the possible reason why the drug was prescribed. In the case of Ivermectin, its use in humans in the context of St. Vincent and the Grenadines as a deworming treatment would be questionable since it is on our current Essential Medicines List (EML) not as a drug of first choice but a

complimentary option in special situations. The EML serves as a guide for drug selection, particularly in the public sector, and is modeled after the WHO Essential Medicines List. In this regard, strict vigilance is advised. Ivermectin is also not included on the OECS Formulary

In relation to the importation and sale of pharmaceuticals in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the Office of the Drug Inspector reiterates that pursuant to Section 5 of the Pharmacy Act, 2009, only registered pharmacies are permitted to import registered or approved pharmaceuticals for sale and distribution to the public. Also, In St. Vincent and the Grenadines, all medicines are registered and permitted entry into the local market by approval from the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Pharmacy Council (SVGPC), for a particular indication.

Further, all prescription drugs intended for human consumption must be sold only on the presentation of a valid order by a registered medical officer or dental surgeon and by a registered veterinary officer, in the case of livestock. Similarly, only registered pharmacists and registered pharmacy technicians, under the supervision of a pharmacist, are allowed to dispense prescribed medicines.

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