

NATIONAL



AUTHORITY

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30<sup>th</sup> January 2019

**CIRCULAR NO. 030**

**Dear Healthcare providers**

**Re: CLARIFICATION ON HYDROCHLOROTHIAZIDE**

This communication is to inform you that NDA has not banned the use of Hydrochlorothiazide in Uganda as reported in The New Vision of 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2019.

We clarify that Hydrochlorothiazide is still on the market. However; as indicated in our earlier circular, health workers should be aware of this risk and take precautionary measures when prescribing this drug to patients.

**About the Risk**

It is well known that ultra-violet light and genetic sun sensitive skin characteristics are risk factors for developing certain skin cancers. Photosensitivity is one of the rare but known side effects of Hydrochlorothiazide and this is indicated in the product label.

Emerging global safety information has indicated a possible likelihood of non-melanoma skin cancer (NMSC), associated with increasing cumulative dose (long term use) of Hydrochlorothiazide exposure especially in patients with genetic predisposition to ultra-violet sensitivity.

NMSC is a rare event whose incidence rates are highly dependent on skin phenotypes and other factors leading to different baseline risks and varying incidence rates in different countries.

As a precautionary measure when prescribing Hydrochlorothiazide, NDA advises the following:

1. Consider a therapeutic switch for patients with known history of skin cancer or significant risk factors for skin cancer.
2. For patients who are taking the drug, they should be advised to minimise excessive exposure to sunlight and educated on use of sun screens.
3. Patients who are at high risk should be educated on checking their skins for any lesions on a regular basis.

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Promoting and protecting public health  
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