

SOUTH AFRICAN PAEDIATRIC ASSOCIATION POSITION STATEMENT**31/03/2026****Zinc Picolinate and Selenium-Containing Products in Children**

The South African Paediatric Association (SAPA) notes the [SAHPRA media release \(8 January 2026\)](#)¹ regarding zinc picolinate and selenium-containing products intended for children.

Position

SAPA, in alignment with regulatory guidance, advises that:

- Zinc picolinate and selenium-containing products should not be used in children (<18 years) unless registered as **Category A medicines with SAHPRA**.
- Healthcare professionals should stop prescribing and recommending zinc picolinate and selenium-containing products in children until manufacturers get proper SAHPRA registration.
- At the moment, these products do not qualify as Category D (complementary medicines) and must undergo full regulatory registration; unregistered products should be withdrawn from the market.
- For approved indications (e.g. cholera, acute and persistent diarrhoea), clinicians should prescribe elemental zinc formulations that do not contain zinc picolinate or selenium, in line with Standard Treatment Guidelines and Essential Medical Lists for South Africa.
- Caregivers should discontinue use of these products in children.

Rationale

- Selenium supplementation in children carries a risk of toxicity, particularly when used outside specific deficiency contexts.²
- Many such products are marketed as “immune boosters,” yet their intended use constitutes medicinal claims requiring SAHPRA registration.
- The Department of Health confirms that zinc picolinate is excluded from national procurement, and standard guidelines continue to recommend elemental zinc for paediatric diarrhoeal disease.³

Ongoing Monitoring

- We have contacted SAHPRA, who confirmed that they are currently auditing products to identify those containing selenium and zinc picolinate.
- SAPA will continue to monitor developments and update members as further guidance becomes available.

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Secretary: Mark Atkins

Treasurer: Claire Procter

Ex-officio: Despina Demopoulos

Members: Zinhle Vilakazi, Boitumelo Pitso, Nosisa Sipambo, Samah El-Boraei, Zoleka Mbhele

References

1. 08 Jan - Warning: Selenium and zinc picolinate-containing products for children. (2026, January 8). SAHPRA. Retrieved April 7, 2026, from <https://www.sahpra.org.za/news-and-updates/warning-selenium-and-zinc-picolinate-containing-products-for-children/>
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