



BE AWARE & TAKE CARE:
Talk to your pharmacist!

Counterfeit Drugs

Counterfeit drugs are fake or 'copycat' medicines, deliberately mislabelled with respect to their identity or source. Counterfeit drugs may look like the real thing, but have too much (or not enough) of the medicine you need.

The fraudulent practice of making counterfeiting drugs can apply to (both) brand name and generic products. If you take counterfeit drugs, you may have an allergic reaction or your medical condition can get worse.

Your risk of buying counterfeit drugs increases by buying medicine on Internet websites because there's no face-to-face contact between buyers and sellers. According to the World Health Organization, 50% of medicines bought on the Internet *from sites that conceal their physical address* are counterfeit.

Counterfeit drugs may be contaminated, or contain the wrong active ingredient, or the wrong *amounts* of an active ingredient. They may contain no active ingredients at all.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

- Buy medicine only from U.S. state-licensed pharmacies. Find your state's contact information from the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP) at www.nabp.info. For California, go to www.pharmacy.ca.gov and click on 'Verify a License' to determine whether the pharmacy is currently licensed.
- Beware if the medicine tastes (or looks) differently than the last time you had the prescription filled; check the appearance of the medicine including color, texture, and shape; pay attention to altered containers or changes in the packaging.
- Check containers for broken seals or changes on the label. If you suspect the drug is counterfeit, contact the pharmacy where you bought the medicine, and be sure to talk to your doctor. Also, notify the Food and Drug Administration by calling (800) FDA-1088 or go to <http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/DrugSafety/ucm170314.htm>.
- Prescription drugs are considered so dangerous they may be sold only after a health care provider (for example, a physician) has examined the patient and ordered a drug for the patient. The 'order' is typically called a prescription. **NOTE:** It is illegal to dispense prescription drugs without a valid prescription.
- Beware of Internet websites offering to prescribe medication based only on a questionnaire -- you may receive an incorrect diagnosis or receive drugs that are inappropriate for your use.

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