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Boards of Pharmacy

Buying Medication Safely Online



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Advise Patients to Purchase Medication From Legitimate Websites

Safe, verified online pharmacies will meet the following requirements:

- Be licensed by regulators in the jurisdiction in which they are located, as well as regulators in the patient's jurisdiction
- Accept only valid prescriptions
- Comply with applicable drug laws and professional practice laws
- Provide readily accessible contact information for patient care inquiries
- Comply with privacy laws and ensure patient confidentiality



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Buying prescription medicine online or through social media may seem to cost less, but it can put patients at risk.



NABP has identified more than 25,000 websites that fail to comply with NABP patient safety and pharmacy practice standards, or applicable laws.



Nearly 95 percent of websites offering prescription-only drugs online operate illegally.



89 percent of illegal online pharmacies reviewed by NABP did not require a prescription for the sale of prescription-only medicine.



Less than 5 percent of consumers are aware of tools to help them find safe online pharmacies, according to **Alliance for Safe Online Pharmacies**.



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Risks of Buying From an Unverified Website

- Receiving bogus medication that fails to treat patients' medical conditions
- Receiving pills with dangerous ingredients, such as drywall, rat poison, and fentanyl
- Buying drugs that have not been authorized for sale by FDA
- Falling victim to fraud and identity theft
- Exposing your computer to malware

NABP has identified more than 25,000 websites selling or facilitating the sale of prescription drugs in conflict with state and federal pharmacy laws.

Most Recent Rogue Rx Findings

- 24,556 sites offer/facilitate the sale of prescription-only drugs without a prescription
- 20,630 sites offer/facilitate the sale of prescription-only drugs that are clearly unauthorized for sale
- 10,980 sites offer/facilitate the sale of controlled substances



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Recognizing Illegitimate Pharmacy Sites Isn't Always Easy

Criminals selling fake medicine online use many tactics to trick unsuspecting patients:

- **Pretending to be Canadian:** Some illegal online pharmacies pretend to be based in Canada to give the illusion of more stringent regulations and safer drugs, but they may be based in countries without the regulatory safeguards found in the US and Canada.
- **Sophisticated websites:** A polished, well-functioning website can convince many patients the site is legitimate.
- **Social media and other marketing techniques:** Criminals don't stop at websites to sell their fake and often dangerous products to patients. They use social media, email, SEO, and other marketing techniques to pull patients to their websites.

Avoid Websites Listed as 'Not Recommended'

Websites on NABP's Not Recommended List appear to facilitate the sale of drugs outside of compliance with state and federal laws or NABP patient safety and pharmacy-practice standards. This includes:

- Lacking licenses
- Not requiring a prescription
- Selling unapproved drugs



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NABP Offers Resources to Help Patients Buy Safely Online

- Patients can educate themselves about the issue at www.safe.pharmacy.
- Patients can use the search tool on www.safe.pharmacy to find out if the site they are using is safe. The database is made up of:
 - Websites identified by NABP as “Not Recommended”
 - Sites verified through the .Pharmacy Verified Websites Program. Approved sites are granted the .pharmacy domain to signify that they comply with applicable pharmacy laws and program standards.
 - Sites that have received NABP Digital Pharmacy Accreditation. After receiving .Pharmacy verification, pharmacy sites may apply for full accreditation, which includes review of policies and procedures as well as an on-site inspection.

- 604 .pharmacy domain names are currently registered
- NABP has granted Digital Pharmacy Accreditation to a total of 80 accredited organizations, accounting for more than 28,600 facilities

Buy Safely

Purchase medication from legitimate websites online. Search for a site to see if it is safe or not recommended.

Check to see if a site is safe:

Search

