

The Basics Of Prescription Safety

(NAPSA)—Anyone with an Internet account knows that we are deluged with e-mails urging us to buy our medicines online—save money, no prescription! Unfortunately, falling for the sales pitch may be dangerous. Many of these Web sites offer unregulated, foreign or just plain counterfeit medicines. Here are some hints to help to make sure your prescription medicine is safe:

- **Talk with your health care provider.** Always consult your physician or pharmacist before taking any prescription medications.

- **Have prescriptions for prescription medicines.** Certified pharmacies always require a prescription from your health care provider. If an advertisement, Web site or e-mail offers you prescription medication without a prescription from your health care provider, it is not a certified pharmacy.

- **Just say no to online prescriptions.** Beware of Web sites and e-mails that offer to provide a prescription for a medication without having a physician see you in person.

- **Know your rights to protect your rights.** Beware of Web sites and e-mails that ask you to waive your legal rights in order to participate in their prescription program.

- **Check for the VIPPS seal.** Before buying prescription medications online, make sure the Internet drug seller is properly licensed in the United



States and meets strict requirements regarding good pharmacy practice. One easy way to do this is to look for the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy's Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Sites (VIPPS) seal on the pharmacy Web site.

- **Report counterfeits right away.** If you think you may have received a counterfeit medication, inform your pharmacist or physician immediately. Your health care professional can report the incident to the FDA Medwatch program at 1-800-FDA-1088.

While importing medicines is sometimes seen as a way to save money, it is important to remember that buying medicines from foreign sources is illegal and unsafe. For more information and advice, visit www.safemedicines.org.

