
health alert



The Time To Act Is Now

(NAPSA)—More and more Americans who think their prescription medications are safe and effective are learning they're wrong. Drug counterfeiting is on the rise, according to a recent report.

While the U.S. is fortunate to have a pharmaceutical distribution system that is generally considered to be among the safest in the world, incidents of counterfeiting nevertheless have increased fourfold over the past several years. It's a growing problem in need of creative solutions.

Reasons for this increase include the growing involvement in the drug-supply chain by under-regulated wholesalers, the proliferation of Internet pharmacies and an increase in people buying medicines from Canada and other countries.

Unfortunately, you may have counterfeit products without even knowing it. Some patients have noticed a different taste, consistency, or appearance of products that are later identified as being counterfeit, or they may have a different reaction to the counterfeit drug. However, there is a potential danger in that you may not be getting the therapeutic benefit you expect from the product. For example, a drug you count on to lower your cholesterol level—or to shrink a cancerous tumor—may not be providing any benefit at all



Counterfeit imported medications can be hazardous to your health.

because it's counterfeit; alternatively, the drug may have too much of the active ingredient, which can be harmful as well.

The best way to avoid counterfeit drugs is to purchase prescription medicines at your local pharmacy. If you fill your prescription online, always see your doctor and get a written prescription first, and use an online pharmacy certified by the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy. In particular, don't buy medication from online pharmacies that aren't licensed in the U.S. or that offer to sell you drugs without a prescription from your doctor.

By working together with your pharmacy—and drug companies—you can help ensure that your medicines make you better.