

# ONLINE PHARMACIES

Warning: A Deadly Threat to Uninformed Consumers

## KNOW THE TRUTH ABOUT ONLINE MEDICINES



Counterfeit drugs are responsible for up to one million deaths annually worldwide<sup>1</sup>; and the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated the counterfeit drug trade was \$431 billion a year industry in 2012.<sup>2</sup>

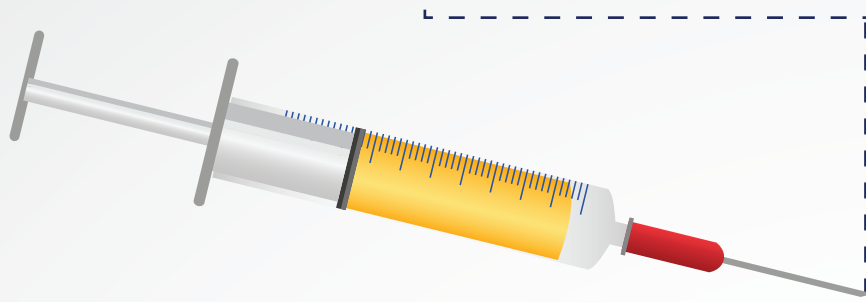


Currently there are 35,000 active online drug sellers<sup>3</sup>; nearly 96% of "pharmacy" websites appear to be in conflict with U.S. laws and pharmacy practice standards<sup>4</sup>; and 50% of medicines sold online are fake or counterfeit.<sup>5</sup>



Medicines sold online often contain little or no active ingredients; are manufactured in unsafe conditions; and/or contain floor wax, mercury, concrete, chalk, boric acid, road tar, paint, anti-freeze and other poisons.<sup>6</sup>

Buying prescription medicines from illegal online pharmacies increases the risk of credit card and identity theft.<sup>7</sup>



THE TREND:  
**1 IN 5**



online shoppers have purchased prescription medicine online, and 56% of shoppers plan to buy their prescriptions online in the future.<sup>8</sup>



**96%**

of online prescription shoppers feel it is safe.<sup>8</sup>



### LIFESAVING MEDICATIONS

used for chronic illness are now the #1 online prescription drug purchased (compared to lifestyle medications in 2010).<sup>8</sup>



### MEDICARE SPENDING

Between 2000-2010, the average out-of-pocket spending among Medicare beneficiaries increased 44% percent, from \$3,293 to \$4,734.<sup>10</sup>



U.S. spending on prescription drugs is projected to continue rising faster than overall healthcare expenses; an average of 7.3% annually.<sup>11</sup>



**90%**

of older Americans rely on one prescription medication on a regular basis; as many as 40% use five or more weekly; and 12% are taking at least ten drugs per week.<sup>9</sup>



**77%**

of Americans are compelled to buy online due to lower prices and convenience.<sup>8</sup>



The majority of online prescription shoppers are 50 and older.<sup>8</sup>

# X the Risk.

## BE SAFE. BUY SMART.

Visit [XtheRisk.com](http://XtheRisk.com) to learn more and verify your pharmacy.

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NCL  
NATIONAL CONSUMERS LEAGUE

SOURCES:

<sup>1</sup> The Effects of Counterfeit Medication, NursingSchoolHub.com,

<sup>2</sup> Policy Innovation Memorandum, No. 21, Council on Foreign Relations

<sup>3</sup> The Internet Pharmacy Market in 2016, Center for Safe Internet Pharmacies and LegitScript, January 2016

<sup>4</sup> Internet Drug Outlet Identification Program, National Association of Boards of Pharmacy, April 2016

<sup>5</sup> Substandard, Spurious, Falsely Labelled, Falsified and Counterfeit Medical Products, World Health Organization

<sup>6</sup> Poisons Found in Counterfeit Medicines, Partnership for Safe Medicines

<sup>7</sup> What you need to know before you buy prescription medications online, Disease Management, 2015

<sup>8</sup> Harvard Business Review, June 2016

<sup>9</sup> Aging and Drugs, J. Mark Ruscin, PharmD, Sunny A. Linnebur, PharmD, FCCP, BCPS, CGP

<sup>10</sup> How Much is Enough? Out-of-Pocket Spending Among Medicare Beneficiaries, Kaiser Family Foundation, 2014

<sup>11</sup> Observations in Healthcare Spending, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, March 2016