

# Buying Drugs Online (Internet)

Shopping over the Internet is private and easy. Online drug stores let you shop for medicine from your computer. There can also be problems with shopping online. Make sure you know the facts before you buy.

## What are some good points of buying drugs online?

- It's easier to get products. This is helpful for people who can't leave their homes or live far from a drug store.
- You can check many different sites to check out products and prices.
- You can ask a pharmacist questions in private.

## What are some dangers of buying drugs online?

*Some websites:*

- May not know the cause of your health problem. They could also give you the wrong medicine for your illness.
- Will sell you prescription drugs even if you don't have a prescription. This is against the law.
- Don't protect your private information, like your credit card number.

*Some medicines sold online:*

- Are fake
- Have things in them that could hurt you
- Are too strong or too weak
- Are too old to work
- Aren't approved by the FDA
- Aren't made using safe standards
- Aren't safe to use with other medicines or products you use
- Aren't labeled
- Aren't stored or shipped the right way

## What role does the FDA play in Internet drug sales?

- The FDA approves all new drugs that are sold to people. FDA and FTC (Federal Trade Commission) make sure that what companies say about their products is true and legal.
- FDA can take action against any sites that:
  - Make a false claim.
  - Sell prescription drugs without a prescription.
- FDA works with the NABP (National Association of Boards of Pharmacy) and the FSMB (Federation of State Medical Boards). These groups all work together to make sure companies follow U.S. and state laws.



# Buying Drugs Online (Internet)

## How can I buy online safely?

- There is a program that makes sure online drug stores are legal and honest. It is called the VIPPS (Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Site). Websites can choose to apply to use the VIPPS seal. Before using a website, check for the VIPPS seal.
- Check out websites with the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy before buying.
- Don't buy from sites that sell:
  - Prescription drugs even if you don't have a prescription.
  - Products that are not approved by FDA.
- Use sites that have a pharmacist to answer your questions online. Only buy from sites based in the U.S. It's against the law to buy prescription drugs from other countries. It could also be unsafe.
- Go to your doctor or clinic before using any medicine for the first time.

**FDA Office of Women's Health** <http://www.fda.gov/womens>

## To Learn More:

### Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

<http://www.fda.gov>

To report problems:

<http://www.fda.gov/oc/buyonline/buyonlineform.htm>

Phone: 1-888-INFO-FDA (1-888-463-6332)