





For More Information


- Contact your local pharmacist
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration Center for Drug Evaluation and Research
www.fda.gov
- Medicare
www.cms.hhs.gov/medicare
- Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America
www.phrma.org
- "Prescription Drug Reimportation Fact Sheet," compiled from "Reimportation of Pharmaceuticals: Economic and Policy Implications Conference, held by the University of Michigan Center for Medication Use, Policy and Economics on October 30-31, 2003.
- American Pharmacists Association The One Minute Counselor, "What You Need to Know About Prescription Drug Importation"
- "Importing Prescription Medications From Abroad: Illegal and Unsafe," Chain Pharmacist Practice Memo, NACDS Foundation, June 2003


Can buying drugs from Canada save money?


Aren't drugs from other countries just as safe as those in the U.S.?


If buying Canadian drugs wasn't safe, wouldn't it be illegal?


Does it really make a difference what country drugs come from?


Isn't a foreign drug supplier liable if they distribute drugs that are dangerous?

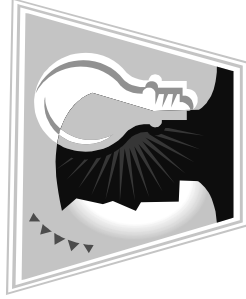
Thinking About Getting Your Prescriptions From Canada or Internet Sources?



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Cost



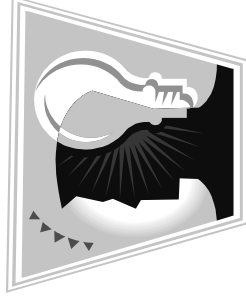
Brand name medications may be available for a cheaper price; however, it is important to note that generic medications from Canada or Internet sources may actually cost more.

Safer alternatives for cost saving include:

- generic medications.
- manufacturer programs.
- Medicare discount cards.
- store-sponsored discounts.

It's true that some medications imported from Canada or purchased over the Internet may seem like they are less expensive, but when you consider the dangerous, or even potentially deadly effects of getting a counterfeit or ineffective medication, the cost savings is minimal. Follow up care necessary after damage from unsafe prescription medications can cost the patient even more money than they saved initially.

Safety



The majority of drugs sold outside of the United States are not FDA-regulated. This opens the door for potential problems with counterfeiting and contamination. The World Health Organization estimates that 70% of drugs produced in developing nations are counterfeit. All medications intended for use in the United States are made by companies that meet quality standards.

Other concerns include issues with inappropriate storage of medications and expired medications. Buying drugs from Canada or Internet sources also eliminates the possibility of patients having a trusted pharmacist to address questions and concerns.



Legal Issues



It seems that if buying prescriptions from Canada were illegal, so many patients wouldn't be doing it. However, the only time it is truly legal for patients to purchase medication from a foreign country is if they have serious medical conditions that can't be treated by medication available in the United States.

Many foreign or Internet distributors require patients to sign a document that releases the supplier from liability. This eliminates the incentive for the supplier to be concerned about drug safety and efficacy.

Even IF the drugs were cheaper from a foreign country, can you afford to give up the U.S. safeguards that protect you?