

Counterfeit Medicines— Filled With Empty Promises

(NAPS)—While counterfeit medicines are rare in the United States, you must take an active role in managing your medicines to ensure you're not at risk. Here are some important facts about counterfeit medicine from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Counterfeit medicines are fake or copycat medicines. They may:

- be contaminated
- contain the wrong active ingredients (the formula that makes the medicine work)
- be made with the wrong amount of ingredients
- contain no active ingredients at all
- be packaged in phony packaging.

Medicines that are counterfeit may not help the condition the medicine was intended to treat and may lead to dangerous side effects. How can you avoid counterfeits?

- Purchase **ONLY** from U.S. state-licensed pharmacies where FDA and state authorities can assure the quality of drug manufacturing, packaging, distribution and labeling. This way, you know your medicine is coming from a reputable source, and you can get help if you have any problems with your medicine. If you buy over the Internet:

- Check to see if a pharmacy is licensed and in good standing in the United States. Contact your local state board of pharmacy or the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP) at www.nabp.net.



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net or 1-847-698-6227, or

- Check to see if an Internet pharmacy site has the VIPPS® Seal, the seal of the Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Sites™ Accreditation Program. This program was established by the NABP to help protect you and guide you through Internet pharmacy shopping. Legitimate pharmacies that carry the VIPPS® Seal are listed at www.nabp.net/vipps/consumer/listall.asp.

- Know your medicine. Any time you get a prescription refilled, check the color, texture, taste and shape of the medicine. Anything different? Talk to your pharmacist.

- Give your doctor and pharmacist a complete list of all medicines (over-the-counter and prescription) that you use. They will also want to know what dietary supplements you use, including vitamins and herbals.

To learn more about counterfeit drugs, visit the FDA Web site at www.fda.gov/counterfeit.