



## Ordering Medicines online- a risky business?

More people are purchasing goods online. Internet shopping is convenient and often cheaper but, if you are buying medicines, **is it safe?** More than half the medicinal products bought online are fake or unlicensed so may not have received adequate checks to ensure their quality or effectiveness. Resulting side effects may be very serious and, in addition, buying from dodgy websites increases the risk of credit card fraud or having your identity stolen.

**Medicines aren't always needed for minor illness in children, but if your child does need a medicine it is important that they have one that is right for their age and that you know how to give it safely. Pharmacists can offer specialist advice about this (and signpost you to other services if needed).**

In addition to teaching children and young people about accessing healthcare through 'traditional' routes, we also need to raise awareness to the potentially serious risks associated with purchasing medicines and medicinal products via the internet and, if medicines are purchased online, educate them about how to do this safely.

**If you are considering purchasing medicine online, it is very important to take the following steps to ensure your safety and the safety of your family;**

**Always buy medicines from a registered and approved online Pharmacy.**



All pharmacies in Great Britain, including those providing internet services, must be registered with the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC). When buying medicines online- check the pharmacy is legitimately registered. Click the logo displayed on the website to check the pharmacy's entry on the register.



In addition to this- all online pharmacies and retailers of medicines operating legally in the EU (including the UK) **must legally** display a distance-selling logo. This means that the seller is registered with the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). Click the logo to check the register and the details of the on-line seller.

In 2016 the MHRA launched the #FakeMeds campaign to tackle the growing issue of falsified, unlicensed and counterfeit medicines and medical devices bought online.

The **#FakeMeds** campaign helps you protect your health and money by providing quick and easy tools so you can avoid fake medical products when you shop online. Click [here](#) for more information.



**Remember- 'Herbal' doesn't mean 'safe'**

Remember that 'herbal and 'all-natural' ingredients do not mean 'safe'. Click [here](#) for guidance about herbal medicines and the risks of buying them online.

**Never take a prescription-only-medicine without a valid prescription:**

To dispense prescription-only medication, a pharmacy must receive a legally valid prescription. Some sites offer online medical consultation services to create a prescription prior to dispensing. The General Medical Council (GMC) offers protection by prosecuting for inappropriate prescribing. [Check their registration status](#) using the GMC website.

**Avoid** websites which offer to supply prescription-only medicines without a prescription

Click [here](#) to access an informative article 'Can you Trust an on-line pharmacy?' providing more detailed discussion and guidance around the issues raised here.

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