



NABP
National Association of
Boards of Pharmacy

Buying Medication Safely Online

Before You Buy, Verify

Safe, verified online pharmacies will meet the following requirements:

- Be licensed by regulators in the jurisdiction in which they are located, as well as regulators in the patient's jurisdiction
- Accept only valid prescriptions
- Comply with applicable drug laws and professional practice laws
- Provide readily accessible contact information for patient care inquiries
- Comply with privacy laws and ensure patient confidentiality

Buying prescription medicine online or through social media may seem to cost less, but it can put patient at risk.



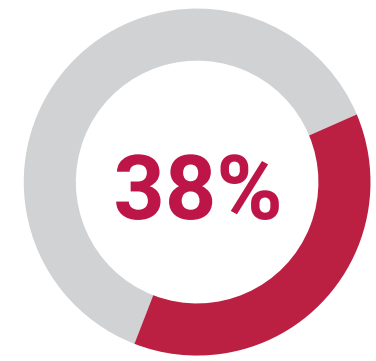
NABP has identified more than 40,000 websites that fail to comply with NABP patient safety and pharmacy practice standards, or applicable laws.



Nearly 95 percent of websites offering prescription-only drugs online operate illegally.



89 percent of illegal online pharmacies reviewed by NABP did not require a valid prescription for the sale of prescription-only medicine.



38 percent of Americans know of an event where someone – either themselves or another – got substandard or falsified prescription medication from an online pharmacy, according to ASOP.

Risks of Buying From an Unverified Website

- Receiving bogus medication that fails to treat patients' medical conditions
- Receiving pills with dangerous ingredients, such as drywall, rat poison, and fentanyl
- Buying drugs that have not been authorized for sale by the FDA
- Falling victim to fraud and identity theft
- Exposing your computer to malware

NABP has identified more than 40,000 websites selling or facilitating the sale of prescription drugs in conflict with state and federal pharmacy laws.

Recognizing Illegitimate Pharmacy Sites Isn't Always Easy

Criminals selling fake medicine online use many tactics to trick unsuspecting patients:

- **Pretending to be Canadian:** Some illegal online pharmacies pretend to be based in Canada to give the illusion of more stringent regulations and safer drugs, but they may be based in countries without the regulatory safeguards found in the US and Canada.
- **Sophisticated websites:** A polished, well-functioning website can convince many patients the site is legitimate.
- **Social media and other marketing techniques:** Criminals don't stop at websites to sell their fake and often dangerous products to patients. They use social media, email, SEO, and other marketing techniques to pull patients to their websites.

Avoid 'Not Recommended' Websites

Websites NABP identifies as Not Recommended appear to sell medication outside of compliance with state and federal laws or NABP patient safety and pharmacy-practice standards. For example, they

- are not licensed,
- do not require a prescription, or
- sell unapproved drugs.

NABP Offers Resources to Help Patients Buy Safely Online

Patients can educate themselves about the issue at [safe.pharmacy](https://www.safe.pharmacy)

Patients can verify before they buy using the Safe Site Search Tool on [safe.pharmacy](https://www.safe.pharmacy). When they enter the web address, they will be provided one of the following results:

- Recommended – these sites have been verified by NABP through its Healthcare Merchant Accreditation or its Digital Pharmacy Accreditation.
- Not Recommended – these sites have been reviewed by NABP and do not appear to comply with applicable laws and NABP patient safety and pharmacy practice standards.
- Site Not Reviewed – NABP has not reviewed, and caution should be used. Patients can use the tips provided on [safe.pharmacy](https://www.safe.pharmacy) or use the form to contact NABP for assistance.

- Pharmacies and other health care businesses that earn certain NABP accreditations are automatically eligible for a .pharmacy domain.
- 614 .pharmacy domain names are currently registered.
- When a website ends in .pharmacy, patients know it is legitimate. Unlike logos, the .pharmacy domain cannot be faked or forged.