

# Know the signs of a safe online pharmacy



Rogue online pharmacies are selling drugs to American consumers outside of the safeguards in place that protect consumers from ineffective or unsafe drugs. Patients could face risks from: not getting the needed treatment, potentially dangerous interactions with other medicines or other possible unexpected side effects. A website may appear to be associated with a licensed pharmacy when it is not or claim to sell “FDA–approved medicines” which are fakes. Many use sophisticated marketing tactics or fake web storefronts to appear legitimate and even careful consumers can be fooled.

## **Make sure the online pharmacy you’re buying from:**

- Requires a prescription from a healthcare provider;
- Is licensed by your state by checking with your [state board of pharmacy](#);
- Does not appear on the [National Association of Boards of Pharmacy’s List of Not Recommended Websites](#). However, just because the online pharmacy does not appear on this list does not mean it is safe;
- Has a state-licensed pharmacist available to answer questions; and
- Is located in the United States.

Additionally, another sign of a safe online pharmacy is one linked to a brick-and-mortar pharmacy licensed in the United States.

# Recognize rogue online pharmacies



Rogue online pharmacies sell medications outside the safeguards that protect consumers from unsafe medicine. Many use sophisticated marketing tactics to appear legitimate.

Beware of online pharmacies that:

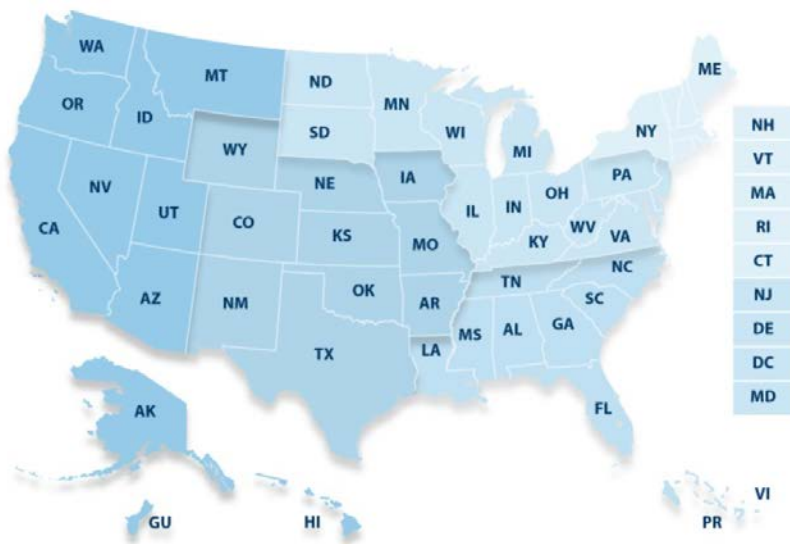
- allow you to buy medicine without a prescription from your doctor;
- do not have a state-licensed pharmacist available to answer your questions;
- offer deep discounts or extremely low prices that seem too good to be true;
- send spam or unsolicited email offering cheap medicine; or
- are located outside of the United States or ship worldwide.

A website may appear to be associated with a licensed pharmacy when it is not or claim to sell “FDA-approved medicines” which are fakes.

Rogue online pharmacies may create websites that appear legitimate. Checking the pharmacy’s license through your state board of pharmacy (or equivalent state agency) is an important step to know whether you are using a safe and legal online pharmacy.

Choose your state from the map below to go to your state board of pharmacy’s license database. (The links to databases provided below are maintained by your state agency.)

If you cannot confirm that an online pharmacy is licensed in the United States, you should not use that online pharmacy.



# Know the health risks of buying drugs from rogue online pharmacies



Buying from rogue online pharmacies can be dangerous or even deadly. According to the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy, only 4 percent of online pharmacies meet U.S. pharmacy laws.

## **You could receive counterfeit, ineffective or unsafe drugs.**

Consumers who buy medicine from a rogue online pharmacy may be putting their health at risk because the products sold, while being passed off as authentic, may contain the wrong ingredients, contain too little, too much, or no active ingredient at all, or contain other harmful ingredients. Before you order your medicine online, it is important to know the risks of buying from rogue online pharmacies.

## **Even slight differences in your medicine can make a big difference.**

Medicine that is approved for use in the U.S. has been reviewed for safety and effectiveness by the FDA. Medicine that is not approved for use in the U.S. and is produced by unknown sources may have slight variations or different ingredients. These variations and different ingredients can put patients at risk from not getting the needed treatment, experiencing unexpected side effects or causing symptoms to worsen. Additionally, potentially dangerous drug interactions can occur because of unknown ingredients.