



## MEET AND TALK WITH YOUR DOCTOR OR PHARMACIST:

One of the most important services a doctor or pharmacist can offer is to talk to you about your medications. A doctor or pharmacist can help you understand how and when to take your medications, what side effects you might expect, or what interactions may occur.

- **Talk with your doctor**

Have a physical exam before you get any new medications for the first time.

- **Use ONLY medications that have been prescribed**

By your doctor or another trusted medical professional who is licensed in the U.S. to write prescriptions for medications.

- **Ask your doctor or pharmacist**

If there are any special steps you need to take to fill your prescription.

- **Online questionnaires**

Should not be used to diagnose any medical issues you may have. Only your doctor or another trusted medical professional can make that determination.

## THE DO'S AND DON'TS

### Things to do:

- Do consult your doctor. Your doctor can determine if a particular drug is safe for you or if another treatment would be more appropriate.
- Do insist on access to a registered pharmacist. Reputable sites offer toll-free access to registered pharmacists for help answering your medication questions.
- Do compare prices. You may find great deals online. But there aren't any guarantees.

### Things not to do:

- Don't use a site that bypasses prescriptions. Only your doctor can safely prescribe medication and monitor side effects.
- Don't overlook the address and phone number. Steer clear of sites that don't provide a street address and phone number or that list only foreign contact information.

Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection

### Prescription Monitoring Program

450 Columbus Blvd, Suite 901

Hartford, CT 06103

(860) 713-6073 • [www.ct.gov/dcp](http://www.ct.gov/dcp)



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# Buying Prescription Medications On-Line



## Keeping You and Your Family Safe



Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection

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## BUYING ON-LINE

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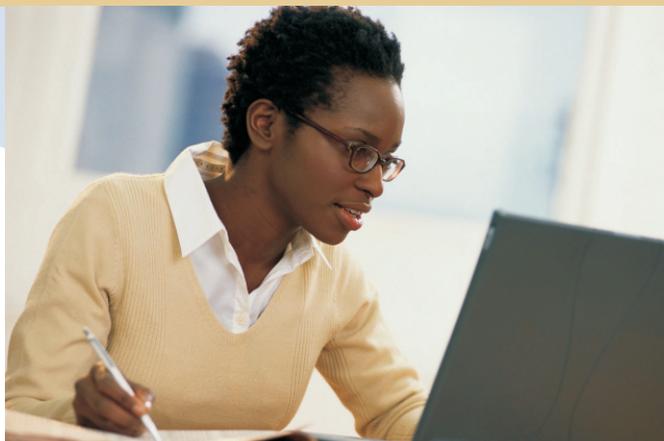
Hundreds of websites offer prescription drugs for sale, and the number of online pharmacies is growing daily. While legitimate pharmacy sites can provide a private, practical, and sometimes cheaper way to obtain prescription medications, particularly for those who live in remote areas or are unable to travel to pharmacies, on-line buyers must take extra precautions to ensure that they are receiving safe medications from a reputable provider.

### Some websites that sell medications:

- Are not U.S. state-licensed pharmacies or are not pharmacies at all.
- May not provide a diagnosis that is correct and sell medicine that is not right for you or your condition.
- Will not protect your personal information.

### Some medicines sold online:

- Are not the real product (counterfeit or “copycat” medicines).
- Are too strong or too weak.
- Have dangerous ingredients.
- Are not FDA-approved (have not been checked for safety and effectiveness).
- Are not labeled, stored, or shipped correctly.



## PHARMACY VERIFICATION

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Check to be sure that you are dealing with a U.S. state-licensed pharmacy. A list of licensed on-line pharmacies has been developed by the National Association of Boards of Pharmacies (NABP) and can be viewed at their website ([www.nabp.info](http://www.nabp.info)).

The NABP has also developed a program to help you identify on-line pharmacies that comply with all state and federal regulations for dispensing of medications. You can recognize these reputable pharmacy websites, all of which display the Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Sites™ Seal VIPPS® Seal . A safe online pharmacy should also:

- Require a prescription from your own U.S. licensed physician.
- Have a pharmacist available to answer questions.
- Provide contact information (including the phone number of a person you can talk to) in case you have problems or questions.



## PROTECT YOUR PRIVACY

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Be sure your personal information is properly protected when buying prescription medications on-line.

- Look for privacy and security policies that are easy-to-find and easy-to-understand.
- Do not give any personal information (such as social security number, credit card, or medical or health history), unless you are sure the website will keep your information safe and private.
- Make sure the website will not sell your personal information, unless you agree.
- Report websites you are not sure of, or if you have complaints about a site. Go to [www.fda.gov/buyonline](http://www.fda.gov/buyonline) and click on “Notify FDA about problem websites.”