



### **Counterfeit Medicines – Filled with Empty Promises**

Around the world, health authorities are battling a growing trade in fake medicines, which the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates are worth more than \$30 billion a year. Most bogus pills are distributed illicitly, often over the Internet, exposing patients on every continent to medicines which may contain the incorrect dose, the wrong ingredients or no active ingredients at all. Given the low production costs, it is a hugely lucrative trade, and some criminals now prefer it to narcotics trafficking according to government and pharmaceutical industry officials.

#### **Counterfeit medicines are fake or copycat medicines. They may:**

- ✓ be contaminated
- ✓ contain the wrong active ingredients
- ✓ 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 you can 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.
- If you buy over the Internet, check to see if the Internet pharmacy site has the seal of the Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Sites Accreditation Program (VIPPS). Legitimate Internet pharmacies carry the VIPPS Seal and are listed at <http://www.nabp.net/vipps/consumer/listall.asp>.

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