

Fraudulent Flu Products

The winter flu season is upon us, and along with it comes scammers selling fraudulent products to unsuspecting consumers online and in retail stores and pharmacies. These products claim to prevent, treat, or cure the flu, even though they have not been approved by the FDA (U.S. Food and Drug Administration) for safety or effectiveness. Beware of fake websites appearing to be online pharmacies selling prescription drugs. Legitimate online pharmacies do exist, but so do many websites that look like safe online pharmacies but are actually fraudulent and engaging in illegal activity. These websites may be selling unapproved drugs that may be dangerous.

These products may be labeled as dietary supplements, foods, hand sanitizers, nasal sprays, and other things that might be dangerous to your health. If you have a question about a treatment or product, always, first talk to your doctor or other health care professional.

What You Should Know: A Flu Vaccine Is the Best Prevention!

First, you should know that THERE ARE NO LEGALLY MARKETED OVER-THE-COUNTER DRUGS (or non-prescription drugs) THAT PREVENT, TREAT, OR CURE THE FLU.

Getting a flu vaccine is the best way to **prevent the flu** and its serious complications, ESPECIALLY for adults 65 years and older, and those with chronic medical conditions. For more information on the flu and vaccine: [It's a Good Time to Get Your Flu Vaccine | FDA](#)

BUT...there are FDA-Approved Antiviral Medications for Flu available by prescription from your health care professional, to prevent or treat the flu and are available by prescription in the form of pills, liquids, inhalers, and intravenous infusion. These drugs work best if started soon after the onset of symptoms (within 48 hours).

HERE'S HOW YOU SPOT suspicious products:

⇒ Types of Fraudulent Flu Products—

Fraudulent flu products claim to prevent, mitigate, treat, or cure the flu and have not been evaluated by the FDA for safety and effectiveness. The FDA is particularly concerned that ingredients in fraudulent products could lead to unexpected side effects and interactions with other medications people may be taking. These include:

- ◇ Dietary supplements, conventional foods (such as some herbal teas)
- ◇ Devices (such as certain air filters and light therapies)

⇒ Potentially fraudulent flu and antiviral products sold without a prescription, which may claim to:

- Reduce the severity and length of flu or other viral infections.
- Boost your immunity naturally without a flu vaccine.
- Act as a safe and effective alternative to the flu vaccine.
- Prevent catching the flu or viral infections.
- Be an effective treatment for flu or viral infections.
- Provide faster recovery from the flu or viral infections.
- Support your body's natural immune defenses to fight off flu or other viruses.

TIPS: There are no legally marketed over-the-counter (OTC) or non-prescription drugs **to prevent, treat, or cure the flu**, but **there are** legally marketed OTC drugs **to TREAT SYMPTOMS**, e.g.: reduce fever a muscle aches, congestion, and other symptoms typically associated with the flu).

How to Respond: Visit the FDA's BeSafeRx campaign to learn how to safely buy prescription medicines online. **BeSafeRx: Your Source for Online Pharmacy Information:** <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/quick-tips-buying-medicines-over-internet/besaferrx-your-source-online-pharmacy-information>

REPORT all scams to the Arkansas SMP — 866-726-2916