

ASK YOUR PHARMACIST

Your pharmacist is your medication expert and can provide advice and information on a wide range of health issues.



Looking for Health Answers Online?

If you're like a growing number of Canadians, you're going online to look for answers to questions about your health. There are many websites that provide information about diseases, treatments and medications. Other sites sell health products.

Consumer Beware!

Being informed helps you make good decisions about your health. However, an Internet site may not contain all the information you need to make an informed decision. Use caution when searching for health information online — stick to reliable web sites. Go to www.canadian-health-network.ca to link to more than 5,000 Internet-based resources. Don't replace face-to-face contact with your health care provider with information from the Internet. Talk to your pharmacist or doctor about the information you found — he or she can help you apply it to your situation.

Buying Online

At any time, you can go online and order prescription drugs, experimental drugs and all kinds of "miracle cures" or "scientific breakthroughs". Beware of claims that seem too good to be true. The Internet is very difficult to regulate. Websites can be created to look like legitimate pharmacies when in fact both the sellers and the products are

illegitimate. Purchasing a medication from an illegal website puts you at risk — you may receive a contaminated or counterfeit product, the wrong product, an incorrect dose, or no product at all.

When you're looking for health answers online, ask yourself:

- ◆ Is the website reliable?
- ◆ Do I really understand the information?
- ◆ How can I be sure I am making the right decisions about my health?
- ◆ Does this information come from a site that is making a sales pitch for a product?
- ◆ Am I sure this product won't cause bad side effects that might damage my health?

Is Your Pharmacy Online?

Many pharmacies have their own websites that provide helpful information and some offer the opportunity to purchase products online. Check with your pharmacy to see if it has such a site.

Remember that by not going to the pharmacy, you miss the opportunity to consult with your pharmacist about your medications and health.

The Internet is a valuable source of health information if you use it properly. The best advice: find the information online but then confirm it in person. Talk to your pharmacist or other health care professional before you make a decision that will affect your health.



**For more information
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