

Buying non-prescription medicines safely online



PSI

CUMANN CÓGAISEOIRÍ
NA hÉIREANN

The Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland

AN RIALTÓIR CÓGAISÍOCHTA
THE PHARMACY REGULATOR

This leaflet tells you what to look for when you buy non-prescription medicines online.

What are non-prescription medicines?

These are medicines that you can buy from a pharmacy or other retailer, such as a supermarket. You do not need a prescription. Examples of non-prescription medicines are paracetamol products for pain relief.

Is it safe to buy non-prescription medicines online?

In June 2015, the European Union (EU) brought in new rules to combat the sale of fake medicines online. When you buy a non-prescription medicine online, it is important that you get exactly what you have bought and that you know that the supplier is operating legally.

Who can sell non-prescription medicines online?

Pharmacies and other retailers across the EU can now sell non-prescription medicines on their websites. However, they must follow the rules set down in law.

A supplier who wants to sell non-prescription medicines over the internet in Ireland must apply to the PSI to be entered on an Internet Supply List. The list is available on the PSI website, www.psi.ie. They must also display the Common Logo on their website.



What is the Common Logo?

All websites selling non-prescription medicines in Ireland must clearly display this Common Logo, introduced by the EU. They must also provide a link, through the logo, to the Internet Supply List on the PSI website. This is so you can check that the supplier you are buying from is a legitimate supplier.



What non-prescription medicines can suppliers sell online?

Registered pharmacies can supply all non-prescription medicines online. They are listed in part A of the Internet Supply List. By law, pharmacists have certain responsibilities, including providing advice to patients about using their medicines and making sure that medicines are not misused. When you buy medicine from a pharmacy website, the pharmacist may contact you to check that the medicine is right for you.

Other retailers can only supply certain types of non-prescription medicines online. For example, paracetamol sold by supermarkets or arnica tablets sold by health food shops. These retailers are listed in part B of the Internet Supply List.



Can websites outside Ireland sell non-prescription medicines in Ireland?

Websites in other EU countries are allowed to sell non-prescription medicines to consumers in Ireland, if:

- the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) authorises the product for use in Ireland as a non-prescription medicine;
- the website displays the Common Logo with their country's flag and a link to their country's Internet Supply List.

The new rules and additional safety features apply to EU countries only.

Can prescription medicines be sold online?

No, it is illegal for suppliers to sell prescription-only medicines online to people in Ireland. You should not use websites which offer to supply prescription-only medicines. The HPRA's website, www.hpra.ie, gives information about the dangers of buying prescription medicines online.





Quick checklist to keep you safe when buying non-prescription medicines online

- ✓ Is the Common Logo displayed on the website selling non-prescription medicines?
- ✓ When you click on the logo, does it bring you to the Internet Supply List on the website of either the PSI or the regulatory authority in another EU country?
- ✓ Is the supplier's website listed in the Internet Supply List of either the PSI or the regulatory authority in another EU country?
- ✓ When you place your online order, does the supplier check that:
 - you are over 18 years of age;
 - you know that you should follow the recommendations for use contained on the packaging of the product;
 - the amount of the non-prescription medicine that you have ordered is reasonable for your personal treatment?



What if I have concerns about a supplier?

Please let us know if you have any concerns about:

- a supplier on the Internet Supply List on the PSI website;
- the use of the Common Logo;
- an Irish website that is supplying non-prescription medicines without displaying the Common Logo.

You can contact the PSI by email at **internetsupply@psi.ie** or by phone at **(01) 218 4000**.

Who is the PSI?

The Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI) has been set up by law to independently regulate pharmacists and pharmacies. We act in the public interest to protect and promote the health, safety and wellbeing of patients and the public.

To find out more, please visit **www.psi.ie**.



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