

FDA: Avoid Drugs Sold on Canadian Web Sites

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Consumers should not buy or use prescription drugs obtained from certain Canadian Web sites allegedly selling counterfeit versions of Lipitor, Propecia, a breast cancer drug, and other prescription drugs, according to a warning issued by the Food and Drug Administration.

In a statement, the FDA said that con-

sumers should not use Web sites that have orders filled by the Mediplan Prescription Plus pharmacy or Mediplan Global Health in Manitoba, Canada, because of reports that these companies are selling counterfeit versions of prescription drugs to U.S. consumers. These reports are being investigated by the FDA, which is working with international law enforcement authorities.

Preliminary results of laboratory analyses for products from these companies intercepted on their way to the United States

have identified counterfeit versions of the following prescription drugs: the cholesterol-lowering agents Lipitor (atorvastatin), Crestor (rosuvastatin), and Zetia (ezetimibe); the antihypertensives Diovan (valsartan) and Hyzaar (losartan-hydrochlorothiazide); Actonel (risedronate), a bisphosphonate for osteoporosis; Nexium (esomeprazole) for gastroesophageal reflux disease; Celebrex (celecoxib) for arthritis-related pain; Arimidex (anastrozole) for breast cancer; and Propecia (fi-

nasteride), for male pattern baldness.

The statement also cited an August 2005 investigation that revealed that some Internet sites claiming to be Canadian were not based in Canada and were selling drugs of "dubious" safety and efficacy. The investigation, conducted at New York, Miami, and Los Angeles airports, found that that 85% of the drugs promoted as coming from a Canadian pharmacy were from 27 other countries and included counterfeit products. ■

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