

Online Pharmacies: Revolutionizing The World Of Prescription Drugs

Internet pharmacy or online pharmacy usually refers to a registered pharmacy that has a retail outlet and also offers to sell or supply medicines and/or other professional medical services over the Internet. Customers can order drugs and medical products online being connected to the Internet or even visit the store in person. An international or mail-order pharmacy may or may not have a physically existing brick-and-mortar store. High drug prices have produced alluring incentives for consumers to look for alternative resources to fill their prescriptions. Essentially, there are three types of Internet pharmacies:

- 1) Pharmacies that only supply drugs for prescriptions written by a patient's physician;
- 2) Pharmacies that charge for a physician, and the drug is provided after the patient completes a simple questionnaire and then the cyber-doctor writes a prescription; and
- 3) Pharmacies dispensing prescription drugs without a physician's prescription.

A recent study finds that sale of drugs through cross-border Internet pharmacies to consumers in many countries has seen a significant and rapid growth. Convenience and cost saving have been the top reasons for online prescription-drug purchasing. Internet pharmacies offer a host of benefits. They are convenient and allow customers to avoid nuisances such as going out in bad weather, parking hassles, standing in line, and the inevitable wait for the prescription to be filled. Many Internet pharmacies offer fast shipping of drugs, allowing customers to avoid the delay of regular mail. Some Internet pharmacies offer lower prices on medications than those charged by traditional pharmacies, as they do not have to bear the fixed costs such as property leases, maintenance, and property taxes. Another major advantage is that the Internet pharmacies can offer privacy that is often lacking in a traditional pharmacy. Many patients feel uncomfortable in purchasing some drugs and asking a pharmacist questions in front of other customers. The customer or patient is entitled to expect the same quality of pharmaceutical care irrespective of whether the service is provided online or face-to-face on the pharmacy premises. To ensure public protection and confidence in the profession many Internet pharmacies have a licensed pharmacist available 24 hours a day to answer questions by phone or by e-mail. Eventually the most helpful benefit associated with online pharmacies is that they offer perks not found in traditional pharmacies, such as e-mail alerts when the prescription is due for a refill and more. Consumers frequently utilize the Internet to obtain health information and products, and Internet pharmacies join a wide variety of healthcare-related websites to provide authentic information related to the drugs they supply.

About the Author

A history of the medical support program during the Mercury program. Discusses the origins of space medicine and its impact on the selection.

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