

Online Pet Pharmacies — Protect Yourself and Your Pet

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) urges pet owners who shop for prescription pet medicines online to make sure they remain aware of exactly what they are buying.

You've seen TV advertisements for Internet pet pharmacies —

"Affordable pet prescriptions!"

"Pet meds at discount prices!"

"No prescription required!"

"Your best source for pet meds!"

Some of these pharmacies promote the convenience of home shopping with the benefit of big savings, but are they a wise option for you and your pet?

Internet sites that sell pet drugs can be reputable pharmacies. However, others are fronts for businesses breaking federal, state and sometimes international law. **Illegal online pharmacies may sell medicines that are counterfeit, outdated, mislabeled, incorrectly formulated, or improperly made or stored.** You are always welcome to call our office to discuss any questions you may have regarding veterinary online pharmacies.

Please review our requirements for working with a pet Internet pharmacy along with the important benefits our pharmacy offers to you and your pet.

Keeping your pet healthy and happy is important. From routine, to advanced optimal care, our veterinary practice is proud to offer the very best in veterinary medicine.

For additional information from the FDA you can visit the following website:

www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/ResourcesforYou/AnimalHealthLiteracy/ucm203000.htm



Happier, healthier pets ... that's what you have in common with your veterinarian.

SAMPLE

Thank you — we appreciate your business!

Pet Internet Pharmacies



what you need to know...

FDA CONSUMER NOTICE

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) cautions pet owners who shop for prescription pet medicines online.

We want you to know —

Our clients always have the option of having a prescription filled at an Internet pharmacy. However, because some Internet pharmacies have dubious business practices, we will need a direct request from you with the name of the Internet pharmacy and what prescription drugs your pet needs. **In order for a prescription to be written, the law requires that a veterinarian must have seen your pet within the past year.** Depending on the patient's medical condition and medication prescribed, this time frame may be shorter.

Using an Internet pharmacy is a little more involved than the TV advertisements would have you believe. Due to concerns about the reputations of some Internet pharmacies and prescription liability we do not fax, call or email prescriptions. **If the Internet pharmacy is generally known to be safe and an ethical provider of pharmacy drugs, we will provide you with a prescription that can be picked up at our office, and you can have the prescription filled by your chosen provider.**

We are happy to conveniently take care of your pet's needs. If you need a prescription refilled at any time, a phone call to our office will have it ready for you to pick up within a short time, or if you prefer we can drop your medication(s) in the mail.

Our pharmacy is a vital and integral part of our practice. It provides our clients and their pets with the latest technology, convenience and the right medications — all at a competitive price. Revenue from our pharmacy allows us to purchase the latest equipment and pay for our caring, dedicated staff of professionals.

Why our hospital pharmacy is your best choice —

PRICE: Internet pharmacies are not always the cheapest source for medication. Our price for most items is typically less than most Internet pharmacies would charge. In addition, some medications are temperature sensitive and require next-day or second-day air delivery, which adds to the cost. Prescriptions sometimes need a signature on delivery, so you need be home to receive the shipment. According to a news story by Channel 5 News, WCVB Boston, "In all but one case the medication purchased from the veterinarian was less expensive" than the Internet pharmacy.

REBATES: Our veterinary practice also passes on manufacturers' promotions and/or rebates, and these frequently result in greater savings. These rebates are not usually available from online stores or catalogs.

CONVENIENCE: Using an Internet pharmacy means a delay in getting your medication. It typically takes one to two days for the online pharmacy to contact us and process the prescription, then there's a two-to five-day shipping time.

INSURANCE: Pet insurance companies require that all prescriptions be FDA approved. If you have pet health insurance you may be reimbursed for medications purchased from a legal online pharmacy. You will be required to provide a copy of your veterinarian's prescription order and a copy of the Internet pharmacy's invoice. When you purchase a prescription from our hospital there is no additional paperwork. Your hospital office call, along with any prescriptions, are all itemized on one invoice for easy submission to your insurance company.

GUARANTEE: Pharmaceutical manufacturers will only honor product guarantees when the medications are prescribed by and purchased from the pet's veterinarian. Internet and mail-order catalogs do not qualify for these guarantees.

SAFETY: Any prescription medication purchased from our hospital has been inspected and approved by the FDA and manufactured and packaged according to U.S. government regulations. Medications purchased online may have been obtained outside the United States and have different strengths and labeling than U.S. products. Sometimes you can tell by checking the label. If approved by the FDA, it should say, "Caution: Federal law restricts this drug to be used by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian." Do not use products that do not have this warning or if the label has been removed.

EDUCATION: Every week representatives from companies like Bayer, Pfizer, Novartis, Merial and others visit our office. These representatives have access to the latest data and research and are a valuable source of up-to-the-minute information. In addition, our staff regularly attends veterinary conferences and reads the latest veterinary medical journals and research papers. We stay up to date on the latest disease trends in our region and stay abreast of recent advances in veterinary medicine. However, our first source of information about products and treatment protocols are the pharmaceutical representatives. Because we offer a full-service dispensing pharmacy on site, these folks make a point of visiting our hospital frequently.