



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION



28 November 2013

FDA ADVISORY
No. **2013-057**

SUBJECT: CONSUMER WARNING ON SELF-MEDICATION

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is seriously concerned over some people who self-medicate on their ailments and conditions using (a) over-the-counter (OTC) preparations, which are safe and effective when used as directed, or (b) prescription or ethical medicines, which require a doctor's prescription. All prescription or ethical medicines have the Rx symbol on their labels.

The requirements for a responsible or correct self-medication are as follows:

- 1) The medicines used are proven safe, effective and of good quality, i.e. the medicines are registered with the FDA;
- 2) The medicines used are indicated for conditions that are self-recognizable or taken by a patient for chronic or recurrent condition after receiving initial medical diagnosis;
- 3) The medicines are specifically designed for the purpose, and with appropriate dose and dosage forms;
- 4) Consumers should read medicine labels and product information, which describe the following:
 - a) how to take or use the medicine;
 - b) the effects and possible side-effects;
 - c) how the effects of the medicine should be monitored;
 - d) the possible interactions, precautions and warnings;
 - e) duration of use; and
 - f) when to seek professional advice, e.g. *If symptoms persist, please consult your doctor.*

Filipinos, friendly and caring as they are, love to share even drug prescriptions with their friends and family members. Chain of drugstores display OTC medicines in shelves and display panels close to food products and food supplements with no pharmacists to dispense the products or pharmacy aides to advise the consumers. Moreover, the increasing use of the Internet in the country allows very easy access to different medicines, both registered and unregistered ones.





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These situations create potential problems of adverse drug reactions. All consumers are advised on the following:

- 1) Always seek professional advice of the doctors whenever you feel ill. You may also ask the community and hospital pharmacists who are trained to give patient counselling on medicines or give advice if you should need to consult a doctor before taking any medicines.
- 2) Never self-medicate by prescription medicine without the supervision of medical doctors. Prescription or Rx medicines are dispensed by the pharmacists only upon the written order of a medical doctor after careful evaluation of the specific clinical condition or situation of the patient with due considerations on the following: a) indications and contraindications of the medicines, b) the individual patient factors such as allergies, pregnancy, co-morbidities, and other medications, c) the dosage regimen, d) provision for follow-ups, and e) documentation, among other things. Sharing of drug prescriptions with friends and family is risky and may result to further deterioration of health conditions, permanent disabilities or untimely death.
- 3) Patients are often influenced by advertisements or the product endorsers. It would be prudent to consult your doctor or the pharmacists before deciding to take OTC products, or even food supplements, especially if you are on medication, on a special diet or undergoing some form of medical therapy to avoid drug interactions, drug-food interactions or drug-disease interactions.
- 4) Always read the package inserts.
- 5) Watch out for look-a-like and sound-a-like medications that may be dispensed to you, e.g. *Celebrex* which is an anti-inflammatory medicine and *Cerebryx* which is an anticonvulsant medicine.
- 6) Always observe all product label warnings and precautions, like *Keep out of reach of children*.

Drug outlets, through their pharmacists and pharmacy aides, are advised to provide patient and client counselling when dispensing both prescription and OTC medicines, including food supplements. This service is not provided when buying medicines on-line as of the moment. All drug outlets are also advised to sell, offer for sale or use, medicines and food supplements that are FDA registered.





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To report adverse drug reactions, please email us via report@fda.gov.ph. To check if the medicine is registered with the FDA, kindly visit the FDA website (www.fda.gov.ph) and type in the name of the brand or generic name in the SEARCH button. For more information or clarification, please email us at info@fda.gov.ph.


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