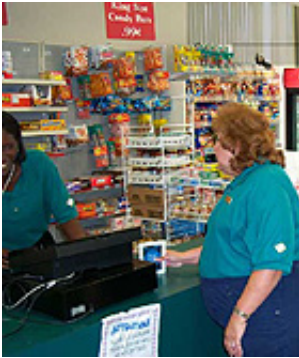


Steer clear of 'miracle cures,' other bogus health products: FDA

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Some can cause serious harm, agency warns.

(HealthDay)—Fraudulent health products are commonplace and can cause serious injury or even death, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration warns.

These products prey on people's desires for easy solutions to difficult health problems and often make claims related to weight loss, [sexual performance](#), [memory loss](#) and serious diseases such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease, arthritis and Alzheimer's disease.

Besides wasting your money, use of these products can cause serious harm or even death.

"Using unproven treatments can delay getting a potentially life-saving

diagnosis and medication that actually works," Gary Coody, the FDA's national health fraud coordinator, said in an agency news release. "Also, fraudulent products sometimes contain hidden drug ingredients that can be harmful when unknowingly taken by consumers."

"Health fraud is a pervasive problem, especially when scammers sell online," Coody said. "It's difficult to track down the responsible parties. When we do find them and tell them their products are illegal, some will shut down their website. Unfortunately, however, these same products may reappear later on a different website, and sometimes may reappear with a different name."

The FDA offered the following things to be on the lookout for when identifying fraudulent health products:

- One product does it all. Be suspicious of products that claim to cure a wide range of diseases.
- Personal testimonials. Success stories, such as, "It cured my diabetes" or "My tumors are gone," are easy to make up and not a substitute for scientific evidence.
- Quick fixes. Few diseases or conditions can be treated quickly, even with legitimate products.
- All natural. Some plants can kill when consumed. The FDA also has found numerous products promoted as "all natural" that contain hidden and dangerously high doses of prescription drug ingredients or untested artificial ingredients.
- Claims such as "miracle cure," "[new discovery](#)," "[scientific breakthrough](#)" or "secret ingredient." Discoveries of real cures for serious diseases are widely reported in the media and prescribed by doctors, not revealed in ads, infomercials or on websites.
- Conspiracy theories. Claims that drug companies and the

government are working together to hide information about a miracle cure are untrue and unfounded.

Even with these tips, it may be difficult to spot a fraudulent health product. If you have any doubts about an unproven product or one with questionable claims, check with your doctor or other health care professional first, the FDA recommended.

More information: The American Academy of Family Physicians offers advice about [herbal health products and supplements](#).

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