

Get up-to-the-minute safety alerts sent straight to your inbox

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From defective child car seats to deadly virus outbreaks at restaurant

chains, you're likely to learn of major product recalls and serious health warnings through various news outlets.

But there's such a large number of alerts, big and small, that you might not hear about all of them, or hear about them soon enough to take steps to protect yourself and your family. One way to stay current is to sign up with the various government agencies that deliver alerts directly to your inbox or smartphone. You can also follow those agencies on Twitter or Facebook.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration puts out alerts about drugs and supplements, medical devices, vaccines and cosmetics through its MedWatch program.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission is your source for recalls as well as [safety standards](#) for [household items](#), and the Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service reports on problems from contamination to food mislabeling, such as not listing an allergen like nuts or eggs on a packaged item's ingredients label.

To make signing up easier, the government has created Recalls.gov, a one-stop-shop for six key agencies. On the site, you can request recall notifications and get a variety of safety tips, as well as conduct your own searches under seven categories: consumer products, [motor vehicles](#), boats, food, medicine, cosmetics and environmental products.

You also have the ability to report your own concerns about any type of product. That's important because it's often alerts from members of the public that prompt investigations and lead to nationwide recalls.

More information: Sign up for [alerts](#) online.

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