

Counterfeit Botox found in California: How to spot fake products and report them

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Counterfeit versions of Botox have been found in multiple states, including California, according to the California Department of Public Health.

The health agency is warning consumers and [medical providers](#) to be wary of the [counterfeit products](#), which have caused "hospitalizations and other serious reactions in people who received injections in non-medical, unlicensed settings."

"Counterfeit or incorrectly administered Botox, even in small amounts, can result in serious health problems and even death," Dr. Tomás J. Aragón, department of public health director and state [public health officer](#), said in a Wednesday news release.

According to the public health department, there are no current links between the [fake drugs](#) and authentic Botox, which is manufactured by AbbVie and approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

The drug is used to smooth out wrinkles and treat muscle-related conditions such as chronic migraines, overactive bladders and eyelid spasms.

FDA-approved Botox is "considered safe and effective" when used as intended, the release said.

What does counterfeit Botox look like?

Here's how to spot counterfeit Botox, according to the California Department of Public Health.

The box or outer packaging:

- Displays the [active ingredient](#) as "Botulinum Toxin Type A" instead of "OnabotulinumtoxinA"
- Indicates 150-unit doses
- Contains lot number C3709C3
- Includes language other than English

The vial inside:

- Indicates 150-unit doses
- Contain lot number C3709C3

What are the symptoms of fake Botox use?

Symptoms caused by counterfeit Botox are similar to those caused by botulism poisoning.

They can include drooping eyelids, difficulty swallowing, dry mouth, slurred speech, difficulty breathing, fatigue and generalized weakness, according to the California Department of Public Health.

If you have any symptoms of botulism poisoning, you should "contact a [health care](#) professional or go to the [emergency room](#) immediately," the agency said.

Who can administer Botox?

If you're considering getting Botox, the public health department says you should seek treatment at an authorized source.

"Consumers should only get injections of FDA-approved Botox from licensed and trained professionals in health care settings. Botox should never be purchased online or through unlicensed individuals," Aragón said in the release.

The California Medical Board allows for Botox to be administered by a physician, a [registered nurse](#) or a physician assistant under a physician's supervision.

When in doubt, "Ask your health care professional if they are licensed and trained to administer Botox," the health agency said.

What should I do if I spot counterfeit Botox?

If you come across counterfeit Botox or suspect it's being used, you can report it on the FDA's website or by calling 800-551-3989.

Fake Botox products can also be reported via the California Department of Public Health's Consumer Complaints website.

Health care professionals can report counterfeit Botox products to the FDA's MedWatch Safety Information and Adverse Event Reporting Program.

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