

WHO, Lilly issue warnings about fake weight-loss drugs

June 21 2024, by Robin Foster



Both the World Health Organization and Eli Lilly Co. warned Thursday that consumers should avoid fake versions of weight-loss drugs that are circulating in numerous countries.

The WHO [warning](#) said that the international health agency has fielded several reports of fake semaglutide—the active ingredient in Novo Nordisk's Wegovy and Ozempic—in all geographic regions of the world since 2022.

"WHO advises [health care professionals](#), [regulatory authorities](#) and the public be aware of these falsified batches of medicines," Dr. Yukiko Nakatani, WHO Assistant Director-General for Access to Medicines and

Health Products, said in the warning. "We call on stakeholders to stop any usage of suspicious medicines and report to relevant authorities."

Meanwhile, Lilly said in an [open letter](#) that it was "deeply concerned" about phony or compounded versions of tirzepatide, the [active ingredient](#) in the Lilly weight-loss drugs Mounjaro and Zepbound.

"These [fake] products are often advertised and sold online, through [social media](#) or at certain med-spas," Lilly said in its letter. "They may contain no medicine, the wrong medicine, incorrect dosages or multiple medicines mixed together, which could result in serious harm. They are never safe to use."

Novo Nordisk has issued [similar warnings](#) in the past about its medications.

The WHO said patients can protect themselves by using prescriptions from licensed physicians to buy the medications. Consumers should also avoid buying the drugs from unfamiliar sources, the agency added.

For its part, Lilly noted any products marketed as tirzepatide and not Mounjaro or Zepbound were not made by the drugmaker and are not approved for use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

More information: The Obesity Medicine Association has more on [weight-loss drugs](#).

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