

Prescriptions rise for veterinary drug for COVID patients, even though it won't help

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(HealthDay)—Despite studies showing that it doesn't work against

COVID-19, prescriptions for the anti-parasite drug ivermectin have climbed sharply in recent weeks as COVID-19 cases surge nationwide, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says.

Prescriptions for what was originally a [drug](#) for animals soared to more than 88,000 a week in mid-August from a pre-pandemic average of 3,600 per week, according to the CDC, the *New York Times* reported.

People are clamoring to get the drug, trading tips in Facebook groups and on Reddit, the *Times* reported. Some physicians have compared the phenomenon to last year's surge of interest in hydroxychloroquine, though there are more [clinical trials](#) evaluating ivermectin.

The increase in demand has been accompanied by a fivefold increase in calls to poison control centers about ivermectin exposures, CDC researchers said.

In Mississippi, 70% of recent calls to the state poison control center were from people who ingested ivermectin from livestock supply stores, the state's health department said this month.

Ivermectin was introduced as a [veterinary drug](#) in the late 1970s, but is sometimes given to people in small doses to treat head lice, scabies and other parasites, the *Times* reported.

Doctors are voicing concerns about a growing number of people obtaining the drug from livestock supply centers, where it can come in highly concentrated paste or liquid forms that are dangerous to humans.

More information: Visit the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for more on [COVID treatments](#).

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