



Americans Increasingly See Online Medicine Purchases as Risky, but Harm and Misinformation Persist

A [new survey](#) from the [ASOP Global Foundation](#) finds that while more Americans are turning to online pharmacies for convenience and affordability, many continue to underestimate the risks. Further, a growing number have already experienced harm.

The [2025 U.S. Consumer Behavior Survey](#), conducted by [Abacus Data](#), shows that two-thirds of adults (66%) now view buying medicines online as risky, a 22-point increase since 2023. Yet 38 percent of Americans have purchased prescription drugs online, and more than half of those (55 percent) buy all or most of their prescriptions digitally.

“Our findings mark a turning point,” said Justin Macy, board chair of the ASOP Global Foundation. “Consumers may be more aware of risks, but misinformation runs rampant, and illegal sellers are taking advantage of affordability pressures and social media to reach Americans directly.”

Widespread Misinformation

Despite rising concern, false beliefs remain common:

- Sixty-five percent believe all online pharmacies are reviewed or approved by the FDA or state regulators
- Fifty-one percent think only safe sellers appear on the first page of search results
- Forty-four percent believe a pharmacy can sell prescription drugs without a doctor’s authorization if medical information is provided

Real-World Consequences

Nearly one in four Americans who purchased medicines online report receiving counterfeit or substandard products:

- Thirteen percent received fake medicines
- Ten percent received expired drugs
- Seven percent received damaged or improperly stored medication

GLP-1 Demand Drives New Risks

The growing demand for GLP-1 medicines used to treat diabetes and support weight management has created new safety challenges. Ten percent of Americans report buying these drugs online, and forty percent of those say they were harmed or received counterfeit or substandard products. Meanwhile, eighty-six percent mistakenly believe compounded medicines are evaluated by the FDA for safety and

effectiveness.

“The surge in GLP-1 demand has created a perfect storm of misinformation, convenience, and cost pressures,” said Carrie Harney, board chair of ASOP Global. “Verifying that a pharmacy is licensed in the United States is the single most effective way to stay safe.”

Closing the Verification Gap

Although most online buyers say they verify pharmacy licensure, only thirty-nine percent use trusted sources such as the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP), LegitScript, or the Pharmacy Compounding Accreditation Board (PCAB). Many instead rely on search engines or website claims, leaving them vulnerable to illegal operators.

Protecting consumers from counterfeit and substandard medicines requires vigilance and collaboration. [ASOP Global](#) and the ASOP Global Foundation stand ready to partner with leaders across government, health care, and industry to ensure that every American can access the medicines they need safely and with confidence.

Learn more about the survey [here](#).