

## Is the Drugstore Safe? Counterfeit Diabetes Products on the Shelves

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### Abstract

It is no longer possible to identify counterfeit medical products, including medications and devices, by simply checking packaging and labeling. Improvements in technology have made it cheaper and easier to produce fake packaging and labels, making it nearly impossible for consumers and authorities to detect counterfeits without conducting tests on the products themselves, as illustrated by the sale of over one million counterfeit blood glucose test strips sold to unsuspecting U.S. consumers at drugstores in more than 35 states and in other countries around the world in the fall of 2006. The pricier the drugs, the more counterfeiters seek to mimic them to maximize returns, victimizing those patients at highest risk who rely on life-saving medications. The interconnected global economy and advances in technology that benefit legitimate businesses and consumers is also benefiting counterfeiters. As pharmaceutical and medical device companies use new technologies and work with governments and international agencies to combat counterfeiting on a global scale, a public awareness campaign is needed to educate consumers to protect themselves.

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**Abbreviations:** (FDA) Food and Drug Administration, (IMPACT) International Medicinal Products Anticounterfeiting Taskforce, (NAFDAC) Nigerian National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control, (RFID) Radio Frequency Identification, (WHO) World Health Organization

**Keywords:** anticounterfeiting, counterfeit drugs, fake pharmaceuticals, Internet pharmacies

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