



Helping Consumers Find Safe and Affordable Medication Online

# Protecting the Public Health

Verifying Pharmacy Websites to Help Consumers Find  
Affordable Medication and Avoid Rogue Online Pharmacies



***Valid Member***

11/2/2014

## Who We Are

PharmacyChecker.com ([www.pharmacychecker.com](http://www.pharmacychecker.com)) is the only independent company that verifies U.S. and international online pharmacies and compares prescription drug prices. Our verifications and price comparisons have been referenced by AARP Magazine, the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, and many others. We were formed in 2002 when our founder, Tod Cooperman, M.D., saw that increasing numbers of Americans were looking on the Internet to save money on medication but did not have proper guidance to protect their health. We are a stakeholder in the online consumer-driven healthcare community, seeking an open Internet environment that promotes innovation and new business models, especially those that serve the public health.

## PharmacyChecker.com Verification Program

Online pharmacies must meet important safety criteria to qualify for approval in the PharmacyChecker Verification Program:

- Pharmacy license (with applicable pharmacy board or licensing authority)
- DEA-issued license for controlled substances (for U.S. pharmacies only: non U.S. pharmacies are not permitted to ship controlled substances into the U.S.)
- Prescription is required (based on an in-person examination, with exceptions where expressly permitted by law)
- Privacy policy (one that affirms a consumer's information will not be shared with third parties)
- Financial and personal information is secure (encryption required on web pages where financial and personal information is transmitted)
- Contact information (mailing address and phone number)

To ensure compliance with the Verification Program prescription requirements, PharmacyChecker.com conducts periodic "mystery shopping" by posing as a consumer attempting to purchase medication without a prescription.

PharmacyChecker.com works with experts to conduct inspections of licensed pharmacies in certain foreign countries to be sure that they adhere to high standards of pharmacy practice.



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**Look for the Seal!**

If you see our seal on a pharmacy website that means it is in our Verification Program and meets our safety criteria. But be careful! Rogue online pharmacies publish fake seals. To make sure a seal is valid, check that it has today's date and links to a page hosted on [www.pharmacychecker.com](http://www.pharmacychecker.com) and provides a profile of the site.

**“Drugs bought over the Internet showed that as long as the sites were approved by a government agency...or a private credentialing agency like PharmacyChecker.com, one runs almost no risk.”**

- Roger Bate, economist and international health policy expert,  
*The Wall Street Journal*, November 2009

## High Drug Prices Are a Public Health Crisis in America<sup>1</sup> International Online Pharmacies Can Help<sup>2</sup>

- **Fifty million** Americans did not fill a prescription due to cost in 2012.<sup>3</sup>
- **Twenty-five million** Americans reported becoming sicker because they are not taking medication due to its cost.<sup>4</sup>
- Cost is the **number one** reason Americans don't fill prescriptions, according to a survey of CVS pharmacists.<sup>5</sup>
- Prescription non-adherence, which includes non-adherence due to cost, adds **\$290 billion** to America's healthcare costs.<sup>6</sup>

Online access to much lower-priced drugs means fewer Americans going without needed medications.

Prices for a 3-month supply of top-selling brand name medications\*

Drug	Local Pharmacy Price	International Online Pharmacy Price	International Online Savings	Annual Dollar Savings
Abilify 10 mg+	\$2,582.97	\$331.20	87.18%	\$9,007.08
Advair Diskus 250-50 mcg	\$1,061.97	\$108.00	89.83%	\$3,815.88
Celebrex 200 mg	\$692.97	\$104.00	84.99%	\$2,355.88
Cymbalta 60 mg+	\$878.97	\$90.00	89.76%	\$3,155.88
Diovan 160 mg+	\$475.99	\$62.10	86.95%	\$1,655.56
Januvia 100 mg+	\$1,026.00	\$131.40 <sup>+</sup>	87.19%	\$3,578.40
Spiriva Handihaler 18 mcg	\$1,115.97	\$132.15	88.16%	\$3,935.28
<b>Average</b>	<b>\$1,119.26</b>	<b>\$118.21</b>	<b>87.7%</b>	<b>\$3,929.14</b>

\*Sources: Local pharmacy -- Rite Aid in New York City; International online pharmacies – lowest prices found on www.PharmacyChecker.com from verified websites. +price calculated from 84 pills. ++price calculated from 100 pills.

## Protecting Americans from Rogue Online Pharmacies and Counterfeit Drugs

Today, millions of Americans buy medication from Canada and other countries online, despite federal prohibitions.<sup>7</sup> In 2008, the Center for Studying Health System Change, a program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, recommended creation of “A user’s guide and price comparison tool for Canada-based or other foreign-based online pharmacies.”<sup>8</sup> This is precisely what PharmacyChecker.com provides.

Unfortunately, thousands of prescription drug selling websites do not follow safe online pharmacy practices. These sites usually don’t require prescriptions or they ask consumers to fill out an online questionnaire that is not appropriately reviewed by a licensed prescriber. These “rogue online pharmacies” are even known to intentionally sell counterfeit and adulterated drugs. Many of these sites pretend that they are safe Canadian pharmacies.<sup>9</sup>

There are no reports of serious adverse reactions or deaths resulting from medication ordered from an international online pharmacy that required a valid prescription. One comprehensive review of patient harm incidents resulting from online pharmacies between the years 2001-2012 found that all involved controlled drugs and/or websites that did not require a valid prescription.<sup>10</sup> Several peer reviewed studies demonstrate the safety of international online pharmacies approved by PharmacyChecker.com.<sup>11</sup> By using PharmacyChecker.com-approved sites, consumers can avoid rogue pharmacy dangers while finding much more affordable medication.

### PharmacyChecker.com in the News:

#### Patients cross borders for online deals on medications

[CNBC - May 23, 2014](#) — PharmacyChecker.com noted for giving consumers peace of mind while looking for international online pharmacies.

#### Ins, outs of getting meds from overseas

[Philly.com - January 16, 2014](#) — If you want to buy your medications overseas safely, Philly.com recommends PharmacyChecker.com as a consumer source for comparing prescription drug prices among certified international pharmacies.

#### Ask Well: Buying Cheaper Drugs Online

[Well Blog - NYTimes.com - October 31, 2013](#) — The New York Times reports that PharmacyChecker.com’s Verification Program protects consumer information and ensures that its online pharmacy members meet quality standards.

#### Pill Pitfalls: Tips to Make Sure Your Medication is Safe

[CBS News - May 22, 2012](#) — CBS News drug safety article tells consumers who personally import medication to only use credentialed websites, such as those approved in the PharmacyChecker.com Verification Program

#### How to Cut Your Drug Costs

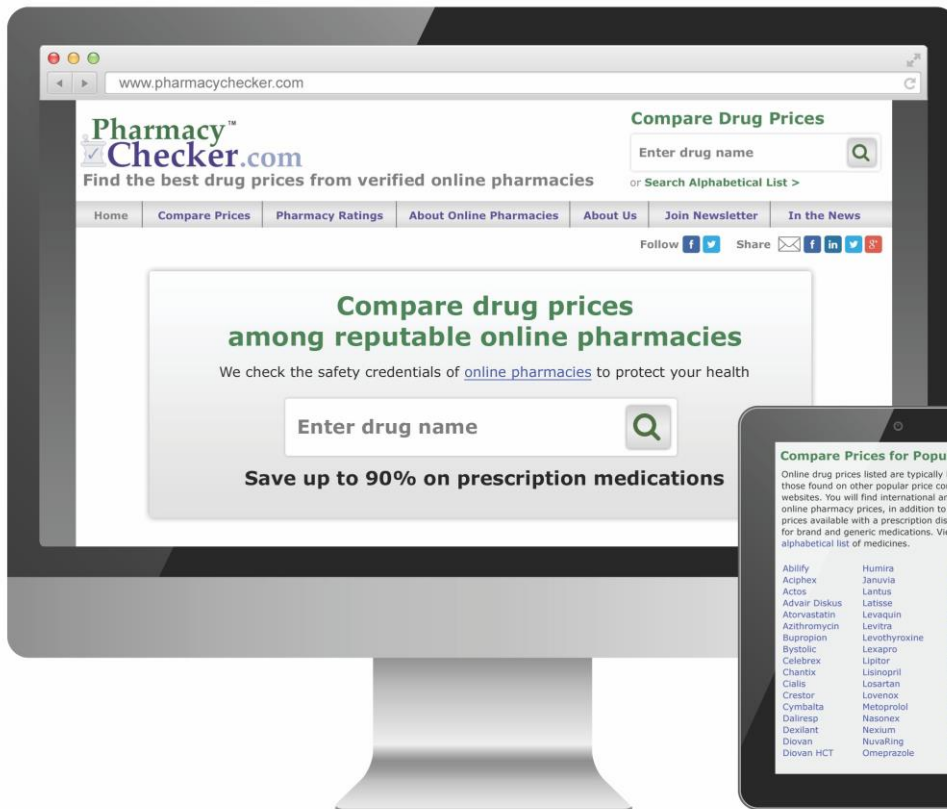
[U.S. News and World Report - July 28, 2011](#) — Listed among other effective ways to save money on prescription drugs, the article notes that PharmacyChecker “...compares prices of mail-order pharmacies, and can help you find the lowest posted prices.”

#### Drug Discount: 5 Ways to Save at the Pharmacy

[U.S. News and World Report - Sept. 2010](#) — “The Pharmacy Checker website provides a useful tool for comparing drug prices among reputable online pharmacies.”

## How Consumers Use PharmacyChecker.com

By comparing prices among verified online pharmacies, consumers can find the lowest prices among licensed pharmacies, protecting both their health and wallets.



Search for prices by entering drug name in the search box

Users can also choose from a popular drug list, look up online pharmacy ratings or other online pharmacy information.

### Januvia Price Comparisons — Select Product

To find the lowest Januvia prices, [click below on the strength of interest.](#)

#### Choose Strength for: Januvia - Brand Version

Strength	Click Below For Prices
25 mg	<a href="#">View Prices</a>
50 mg	<a href="#">View Prices</a>
100 mg	<a href="#">View Prices</a>

After choosing a drug, users select their desired strength.

Compare prices, with pharmacy details such as pharmacy locations, shipping fees, total costs and safety information

### Januvia 100 mg Prices — Brand Version

Find the lowest cost before you buy Januvia. Compare Januvia 100 mg prices below.

PRICE ALERTS: To help you save money, sign up for our free price comparison alerts for Januvia 100 mg.  Monthly Save Alert

Online Pharmacy	Quantity	Price Per Pill or Unit	Total Price	PharmacyChecker Approved?	Pharmacy Locations	Check Pharmacy Price
SampleDrugs.com © 2011	56	\$2.22	\$134.19	Yes	Australia, Canada, Mauritius, NZ, Turkey, UK, USA	GO
SampleDrugs.com © 2011	84	\$1.94	\$172.89	Yes	Australia, Canada, Mauritius, NZ, Turkey, UK, USA	GO
SampleOnlinePharmacy.com	56	\$1.55	\$96.00	Yes	Canada, India, NZ, Singapore, Turkey, UK, USA	GO
SampleOnlinePharmacy.com	84	\$1.51	\$136.00	Yes	Canada, India, NZ, Singapore, Turkey, UK, USA	GO
SAMPLE PHARMACY CANADA	56	\$1.56	\$97.39	Yes	Australia, Canada, India, NZ, Singapore, Turkey, UK, USA	GO
SAMPLE PHARMACY CANADA	84	\$1.52	\$137.59	Yes	Australia, Canada, India, NZ, Singapore, Turkey, UK, USA	GO

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> "Medication adherence: A call for action," *American Heart Journal*, 1 September 2011 (volume 162 issue Pages 412-424 DOI: 10.1016/j.ahj.2011.06.007). Authors: Hayden B. Bosworth, Bradi B. Granger, Phil Mendys, Ralph Brindis, Rebecca Burkholder, Susan M. Czajkowski, Jodi G. Daniel, Inger Ekman, Michael Ho, Mimi Johnson, Stephen E. Kimmel, Larry Z. Liu, John Musaus, William H. Shrank, Elizabeth Whalley Buono, Karen Weiss, Christopher B. Granger. See <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3947508/> [Last accessed 7/5/2014].
- <sup>2</sup> Bate, Roger, Ginger Zhe Jin, and Aparna Mather, "In Whom We Trust: The Role of Certification Agencies in Online Drug Markets," *The B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy*, Volume 14, Issue 1, Pages 111–150, ISSN (Online) 1935-1682, ISSN (Print) 2194-6108, DOI: [10.1515/bejeap-2013-0085](https://doi.org/10.1515/bejeap-2013-0085). In this peer-reviewed study, international online pharmacies credentialed by PharmacyChecker.com were all found to require valid prescriptions and dispense only genuine prescription medications, ones sold at a much lower cost than the same medications sold in U.S. pharmacies.
- <sup>3</sup> S. R. Collins, R. Robertson, T. Garber, and M. M. Doty, "Insuring the Future: Current Trends in Health Coverage and the Effects of Implementing the Affordable Care Act", The Commonwealth Fund, April 2013.
- <sup>4</sup> USA Today/Kaiser Family Foundation/ Harvard School of Public Health, [Health Care Costs Survey, 2005](http://www.kff.org/health-costs/poll-finding/health-care-costs-survey-summary-and-chartpack/). The survey finds that 20% of respondents, adult Americans, report not filling a prescription due to cost; 54% of those respondents said their condition got worse as a result. Extrapolated to the 2012 population of adults 18 and older, which is 234,564,071, the number is approximately 25 million people. See <http://www.kff.org/health-costs/poll-finding/health-care-costs-survey-summary-and-chartpack/> [Last accessed 7/5/2014].
- <sup>4</sup> USA Today/Kaiser Family Foundation/ Harvard School of Public Health, [Health Care Costs Survey, 2005](http://www.kff.org/health-costs/poll-finding/health-care-costs-survey-summary-and-chartpack/). The survey finds that 20% of respondents, adult Americans, report not filling a prescription due to cost; 54% of those respondents said their condition got worse as a result. Extrapolated to the 2012 population of adults 18 and older, which is 234,564,071 people, the number is approximately 25 million people who said their condition got worse. See <http://www.kff.org/health-costs/poll-finding/health-care-costs-survey-summary-and-chartpack/> [Last accessed 7/5/2014].
- <sup>5</sup> "CVS Caremark Survey Says Cost is Biggest Barrier to Prescription Adherence," CVS Caremark, 9/27/2013, <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/cvs-caremark-survey-pharmacists-say-cost-is-biggest-barrier-to-medication-adherence-171516471.html>, [Last accessed 8/22/2013].
- <sup>6</sup> U.S. Food and Drug Administration. 76 FR 12969. March 2011. [Campaign To Improve Poor Medication Adherence](http://www.fda.gov/oc/2011/03/campaign-to-improve-poor-medication-adherence).
- <sup>7</sup> "Best Buy Drugs Prescription Drug Tracking Poll 3," August 10, 2011, Consumer Reports National Research Center; see <http://www.consumerreports.org/health/resources/pdf/best-buy-drugs/2011-BBD-Rx-poll-public-release.pdf> [Last accessed 10/21/2014]. This survey shows that about 4.6 million Americans buy medication online from outside the U.S. FDA. FDA officials have stated that individuals who order non-controlled prescription drugs from Canada or other foreign sources (up to a three-month supply) for their own use are not being pursued or prosecuted. However, under most circumstances, it is technically not legal for individuals to import most prescription drugs. See U.S. FDA Regulatory Procedures Manual – April 2013 Chapter 9 Import Operations and Actions: See <http://www.fda.gov/downloads/ICECI/ComplianceManuals/RegulatoryProceduresManual/UCM179501.pdf> [Last accessed 7/3/2014].
- <sup>8</sup> Tu, Ha T. and Catherine Corey, "State Prescription Drug Price Websites: How Useful to Consumers," HSC Research Brief #1, February 2008, Center for Studying Health System Change. See <http://www.hschange.com/CONTENT/966/> [Last accessed 9/20/14].
- <sup>9</sup> Levitt, Gabriel, "Anatomy of Fake Canadian Online Pharmacy," July 3, 2013, PharmacyCheckerBlog, see <http://pharmacycheckerblog.com/fake-canadian-online-pharmacy-anatomy> [Last accessed 10/27/2014].
- <sup>10</sup> This review was published by an organization funded by pharmaceutical companies and pharmacy trade associations that actually oppose safe personal drug importation. The source is the Alliance for Safe Online Pharmacies' Response to the U.S. Intellectual Property Enforcement Coordinator's Request for Public Comment on the Development of the Joint Strategic Plan on Intellectual Property Enforcement, <http://safeonlinerx.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/ASOP-Response-to-IPEC.pdf>. See Gabriel Levitt, "Scare Tactics Over Foreign Drugs," *New York Times*, March 25th, 2014, Page 27, See [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/25/opinion/scare-tactics-over-foreign-drugs.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/25/opinion/scare-tactics-over-foreign-drugs.html?_r=0) [Last accessed July 5th, 2014].
- <sup>11</sup> See endnote 2 above. The data in Bate, et al, combines two studies involving prescription drug purchases and quality testing of those purchases, one in 2009 the other in 2011, including 195 orders from international online pharmacies approved by PharmacyChecker.com. All prescription orders received by PharmacyChecker.com approved international online pharmacies, which came from a variety of countries (not just Canada) were genuine medications (all but one marketed by Pfizer and AstraZeneca: 90.3% (177) were identical to drugs sold in the U.S. by the same manufacturer; 8.7% (17) were foreign versions made by Pfizer or AstraZeneca; less than 1% (1) was a generic substitution, which according to Mr. Bate contained the right active ingredient and dosage).

## PharmacyChecker.com Management Team

### **Tod Cooperman, M.D., President and Founder**

Tod Cooperman, a graduate of the Boston University School of Medicine, is a nationally-recognized researcher, writer, and speaker on consumer healthcare issues. In addition to founding PharmacyChecker.com, Dr. Cooperman founded ConsumerLab.com, the leading independent evaluator of dietary supplements (vitamin, mineral, herbal, and non-herbal) and nutrition products. Dr. Cooperman is a frequent guest on The Dr. Oz Show.

### **Gabriel Levitt, Vice President and co-founder**

Mr. Levitt manages the online pharmacy verification program and listing programs, as well as web content and development. He is responsible for business development, public relations, and research. He is also a public advocate for prescription drug affordability in America, Internet freedom, and the United Nations. He has [testified before Congress](#) on issues relating to access to affordable medicines and Internet freedom, published an [op-ed in \*The New York Times\*](#) about online pharmacies and personal drug importation, and is the proud author of a chapter in an anthology about [defeating the Stop Online Piracy Act \(SOPA\)](#). Mr. Levitt is president of the United Nations Association Brooklyn Chapter and sits on the Brooklyn County Democratic Committee. Mr. Levitt received his Masters in International Relations from American University and a Bachelor's degree in International Relations and Political Science from Roger Williams University.

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