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The Irish Medicines Board

The Irish Medicines Board's mission is to protect and enhance public and animal health through the regulation of medicines, medical devices and healthcare products.

The IMB monitors the safety of medical devices available in Ireland. We aim to ensure that all medical devices on the Irish market are safe and that medical device manufacturers comply with all safety regulations. We identify and address device safety issues so that a medical device does not compromise the health and safety of the patient or the person who uses it.

The IMB cannot provide advice on which medical devices you should buy.

More information

This is one in a series of information leaflets that are available from the IMB and from the IMB website, www.imb.ie.



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our
advice
on

buying medical devices online



These days more and more people buy healthcare products over the internet. Many of these products may be classed as medical devices. This leaflet gives you information about medical devices and highlights some key issues about buying them online.

What is a medical device?

A medical device is a healthcare product or piece of equipment that a person uses for a medical purpose. It is not a medicine or drug. Medical devices can diagnose, monitor or treat disease and help people with physical impairments become more independent. Examples of medical devices include contact lenses, pregnancy tests, wheelchairs, blood pressure meters, blood glucose meters, test strips and more complex equipment like cardiac defibrillators and HIV testing kits.

CE A valid medical device bears a CE mark, which indicates that it meets the basic requirements for safety and effectiveness under European law.

Buying a medical device online

One in three Irish internet users now buy everyday products online. While only a few people buy medical devices online, the potential risk to users is relatively high. Buying a medical device over the internet may give you privacy and save you money, but the risks associated with the device may be higher.

While genuine devices are available online, some other devices that are advertised may pose a threat to your health. Some medical devices may not work or be tested properly, may not be intended for your condition, may be only for healthcare professionals to use or may even be fake.



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Things to consider

If you are planning to buy a medical device over the internet you should consider the following:

- Talk to a health care professional, such as your GP, before buying a medical device.
- Make sure that the device you are planning on buying has a CE mark.
- Devices that are CE marked and sold on the European market must come from a registered business premises in Europe. Look for a European address.
- Be wary of medical devices that make elaborate claims – they may not be true.
- You should only buy prescription devices, such as contact lenses, from trusted websites that know your prescription.
- Don't buy devices from auction sites.
- Try to buy directly from the manufacturer or an authorised dealer. If there is one, fill in the warranty form so that the manufacturer can contact you if they need to, for example if they need to recall the product.