

Are Your Generic Drugs Putting You at Risk?

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See what a leading Christian cardiologist has to say about it.

Widespread manufacturing irregularities at generic drug factories around the world are endangering America's health and costing consumers a bundle, according to a top doctor.

The vast majority of prescription drugs sold in the U.S.—86 percent—are generic and the recalls keep coming—proof that these drugs are posing public health risks, Chauncey Crandall, M.D. tells *Newsmax Health*.

“This is a very scary problem and it's not getting better; it's getting worse,” adds Dr. Crandall, chief of the cardiac transplant program at the world-renowned Palm Beach Cardiovascular Clinic in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida.

Two weeks ago, the Indian company Sun Pharma recalled more than 216,000 bottles of drugs after trace elements of the chemical benzophenone were found in the medications. That recall included 187,106 bottles of felodipine (Plendil), a blood pressure medication, and 29,660 bottles of the antidepressant imipramine (Tofranil).

“This is a dangerous problem and it's only going to get worse because globalization, coupled with the drive to cut costs, is resulting in even more drug manufacturing going on in developing countries,” says Dr. Crandall, author of the ***Heart Health Report*** newsletter.

Sun Pharma is a major drug manufacturer in India, which supplies 40 percent of the generic drugs sold in the U.S. But drugs made in other developing countries have resulted in

problems as well.

“Generic drug companies are taking advantage of the global economy. In countries like India, Taiwan and China, large companies farm out their contracts to ‘mom and pop’ operations who may be making drugs over coal-fired stoves in unsanitary conditions,” Dr. Crandall says. “This is leading to a tremendous problem. No one knows what kind of impurities are getting into these drugs, no one knows what kinds of fillers are being used.

“For example, consider a patient taking a high blood pressure drug like lisinopril. Maybe the supply they are taking was manufactured in Pakistan this month, but in India or Cambodia the next month. There’s no way of knowing because big chains like Wal-Mart, CVS, and Walgreens put these contracts out to bid, so the drug ingredients and strength can change from refill-to-refill.”

Dr. Crandall notes consumers often can’t tell what’s in the medications they take.

“It’s impossible to know from the label what the dosage is, whether the active ingredient works or not, and what fillers have been added, and the results for the patient can be catastrophic,” he explains.

“A patient taking an ineffective chemotherapy drug could see their cancer come back. Poorly manufactured blood pressure pills could result in patients having a stroke, or someone with high cholesterol could have to abandon their statin drugs due to side effects from unapproved fillers. There’s just no way of knowing what’s happening.”

With generic drugs so widespread it’s nearly impossible to avoid them so Dr. Crandall offers these three tips:

- Check your health insurance policy before you agree to a generic drug. Insurance companies often require patients

to buy generic drugs whenever possible, but insist on the brand name drug whenever possible.

- Monitor your response. If your blood pressure was controlled when you were taking the brand name prescription drug but it no longer is on a generic, ask your doctor to intervene with your insurance company.
- Don't depend on the prescription drugs to keep you healthy. Take charge of your own health. Live a healthy lifestyle. Keep your weight down, eat right and exercise. You'll lessen your chances of having to go on drugs altogether. {eoa}

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