



REALITIES OF IMPORTATION

DRUG IMPORTATION Myth vs. Fact

Drug importation proponents have perpetuated many myths about the supposed safety and benefits of importation. Here are the facts.

MYTH	FACT
Importation is safe.	There are numerous recorded instances of contaminated or counterfeit drugs. The FDA has said repeatedly that it cannot verify the quality or safety of medicines procured through importation.
The United States government would make sure medicines are safe.	Currently, the Department of Health and Human Services has the authority to allow drug importation if the secretary certifies to Congress that such imports would not threaten the health and safety of the American public and would generate cost savings for consumers. To date, no secretary (democrat or republican) has been able to do that.
Drugs purchased from other countries are the same as those sold in the U.S.	Foreign drugs may not be the same and could put patients at risk. Even if medicines look the same, they may be different in dosage or strength. Medicines may have different labels – including in other languages – increasing the burden on patients and health care providers and pharmacists.
Canada will ensure medicines are safe.	Canadian authorities have expressly stated they are not responsible for the safety and quality of prescription drugs exported from Canada into the United States.
Importation helps U.S. trade.	Importation is contrary to free market principles that drive American innovation. Importation would cede U.S. sovereignty to other countries and import harmful price controls.
No one has been hurt by imported drugs.	Unfortunately, there have been numerous instances of harm caused to patients because of imported or online-purchased drugs. Patients in the U.S., the UK and Canada (among others) have died through online purchases of contaminated fake medicines or the lack of a doctor or pharmacist supervising the use of medicines acquired online.
Importation saves money.	Most of any potential savings from commercial-scale importation proposals would be absorbed by middlemen. Individual consumers can often achieve greater savings through safer means, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Checking if generics are available• Shopping around for different health plans• Shopping around for different pharmacies• Seeking out patient assistance programs