

# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW: THE HARMS OF COUNTERFEIT OBESITY DRUGS

*What to know about the rise in fake GLP-1 medications and how it impacts patients and providers.*

## QUICK GUIDE

### WHAT'S THE ISSUE

- For over two years, there was a national shortage of the ingredients used in popular GLP-1 drugs like Wegovy and Ozempic.
- This shortage led the FDA to allow compounding pharmacies to produce temporary, off-brand versions.
- As of early 2025, the shortage ended and the FDA banned compounded GLP-1 drugs, but counterfeit versions have continued to circulate in the U.S., prompting federal health warnings.

### HOW THIS IMPACTS PATIENTS

- Counterfeit GLP-1 drugs are dangerous — their contents, dosage and safety are unknown.
- These drugs aren't only used for weight loss; some are critical for diabetes management.
- Latino patients, who already face higher obesity and diabetes rates, are at greater risk from counterfeit or unregulated products.

### WHAT PHYSICIANS SHOULD KNOW

- Ensure prescriptions come only from trusted, licensed medical providers and verified pharmacies.
- Educate patients on how to spot counterfeit drugs: suspicious packaging, missing labels or websites offering unusually low prices.

### FEDERAL ACTION

- In July 2025, 80+ bipartisan congressional representatives urged the FDA to take immediate action against counterfeit anti-obesity drugs.
- They called for stronger enforcement and border inspections, especially against illegal imports from China.
- In September 2025, the FDA issued a public warning on unapproved GLP-1 drugs being sold online as “research products.”

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Report counterfeit or suspicious products to FDA's MedWatch.
- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist before using any weight loss or GLP-1 medication.
- Stay informed — follow updates from [FDA.gov](https://www.fda.gov) or your local health department.

