

Press Release

Advisory to the Public on Spurious Drugs

Spurious drugs are a major threat to public health. Spurious drugs or Counterfeit drugs are falsified medicines manufactured by anti-social elements concealing the true identity of the product and made to resemble another drug of a reputed company, especially some popular brand, to deceive the public and cash on the popularity of original product. Spurious drugs may even bear the details of a manufacturer who does not exist i.e. fictitious company.

Spurious drugs may contain no active ingredient ('Nil' medicine and found to commonly contain chalk, corn starch or potato starch etc) **(or)** the wrong active ingredient (Example: Amoxicillin Capsules may contain Paracetamol instead of Amoxicillin) **(or)** the wrong amount of the correct active ingredient (Example: Amoxicillin Capsules 500 mg may contain only 50 mg of Amoxicillin). Some spurious drugs have been toxic in nature with either fatal levels of the wrong active ingredient or other toxic chemicals.

Spurious drugs place the patient's health at grave risk. Spurious drugs not only fail to cure the disease but over time, create disastrous consequences for the patient. They lead to loss of confidence in medicines, healthcare providers and health systems.

Spurious drugs are by their very nature difficult to detect. They are often designed to appear identical to the genuine product.

Officers of Drugs Control Administration, Telangana are working relentlessly to detect Spurious Drugs movement in the market and making every effort to make the State of Telangana free of spurious drugs.

Drugs Control Administration, Telangana seized fake Anti-cancer drugs at a godown in Machabollaram in December, 2023.

DCA Telangana busted Counterfeit / Spurious Drugs rackets in Hyderabad regarding entry of Spurious Drugs into Telangana State from Kashipur, Uttarakhand and Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh through courier in December, 2023 and January, 2024.

Spurious/ Counterfeit drugs detected and seized by DCA officials during raids carried out in the months of December, January include fake medicines which are falsely labeled under the names of reputed companies like Sun Pharma (Rosuvas 10 Tablets - used in the treatment of High cholesterol), Glenmark Pharma (Telma H Tablets, Telma 40 Tablets– used in the treatment of Hypertension), Aristo Pharmaceuticals (Monocef-O 200 Tablets – Antibiotic), Torrent Pharma (Chymoral Forte – used to relieve pain and swelling).

DCA Officials also found three varieties of antibiotics MPOD-200 Tablets (Cefpodoxime Proxetil and Lactic Acid Bacillus Tablets) and MEXCLAV 625 Tablets (Amoxicillin and Potassium Clavulanate, Lactic Acid Bacillus Tablets) and 'Cefoxim-CV Tablets (Cefpodoxime Proxetil & Potassium Clavulanate, Lactic Acid Bacillus Tablets) during the raids which are labeled as manufactured by 'Meg Lifesciences, Palli Gaon, Sirmour, Himachal Pradesh' which is found to be a fictitious/non-existent company.

Some spurious drugs are almost visually identical to the original/genuine product and very difficult to detect. Many times a laboratory test is the only

way to identify the difference. **However, in certain cases spurious drugs may be identified by:**

- **Side-by-side comparison:** If it is a product you have used before, compare the suspicious product with that of the earlier used product of the same company to identify the differences between the suspected spurious/counterfeit drug and an original drug.

Try to match it with previous packaging. Please take a photograph of the product if you are using it often for future comparison in case of suspicion.

- Medicines are manufactured with precision, so any variation in size, weight, colour, quality or embossing could indicate counterfeiting.
- **Spelling errors:** Check the medicines for spelling mistakes or grammatical errors. Mistakes in the product name, manufacturer, or main ingredients on medicine labels should also be considered suspicious.
- Check the manufacturing date, expiry date and ensure any details on the outer carton match the dates shown on the inner label of strip, blister, or bottle.
- **Medicine appearance:** Ensure that the medicine looks correct, any change in the size and shape with that of the earlier used medicine of the same company; Ensure that the medicine is not discoloured, degraded or has an unusual smell.

If the tablets are blister-packed, ensure that all the blisters are same. If the tablets are in bottle then all the tablets must look the same. If tablets are found chipped or cracked or have a faulty coating such products should also be considered suspicious.

- Public may notice variations **in the appearance and packaging as indicated in the 'examples' mentioned in the Annexure.**
- **Suspiciously low-priced products:** Check the price of the product against the product you usually buy or with reputed companies. **If it is substantially cheaper or offered with huge discount, it is likely to be a fake product.**
- **Lack of authenticity** – Bar code or QR Code for 300 brand names notified by the Government of India:

Government of India notified 300 top brand names (under Schedule H2 of Drugs Rules – List available of DCA, Telangana website) **manufactured after August-2023 (check manufacturing date)** shall bear Bar Code or Quick Response Code on its primary packaging label or, in case of inadequate space in primary package label, on the secondary package label that store data or information legible with software application (QR Code reader on mobile) to facilitate authentication, as an anti-counterfeiting measure.
- **Compromised packaging:** Check whether the packaging is in a good condition. In certain cases, medicines which come in the original manufacturer packaging are sealed. Check whether the seals are intact and there are no signs of tampering. If the seal appears open or tampered with, it should also be considered suspicious.
- If you experience any unusual health problems, including unexplained side effects or unusual allergic reactions on the use of any drug, it should also be considered suspicious.
- Insist for a bill for the medicines purchased from a medical shop. **No Bill No Pill.**

- **Place of purchase of medicines: Never purchase medicines from unregulated websites or other internet platforms.** Risks to public are significantly increased when purchasing medicines from unlicensed and unregulated sources. Medicines shall be purchased only from licensed medical shops. Medical shops 'display licences issued by Drugs Control Administration, Telangana' conspicuously, in a prominent place in the shop, open to the public. Selling of medicines without licence is an offence and medicines purchased from unlicensed premises are likely to be fake products.

How to report suspected spurious drugs:

In case of suspicion that a product is fake or spurious:

- You may report to the local Drugs Inspector or Assistant Director, Drug Control Administration. The details of the contact number and address of the office are available on Drugs Control Administration, Telangana website <https://dca.telangana.gov.in/> under 'Key Contacts' section.
- DCA **Toll Free Number 18005996969** functional from 10.30 am to 5.00 pm on all working days
- Medical shops located in Telangana State prominently display 'poster' bearing the details of the local drugs inspector (name, contact number, address) and the toll free number of DCA. Suspected spurious drugs information may be reported to Drugs Control Administration, Telangana officials either to their contact numbers or toll free number of DCA.

Date: 12-01-2024





V.B. KAMALASAN REDDY, IPS

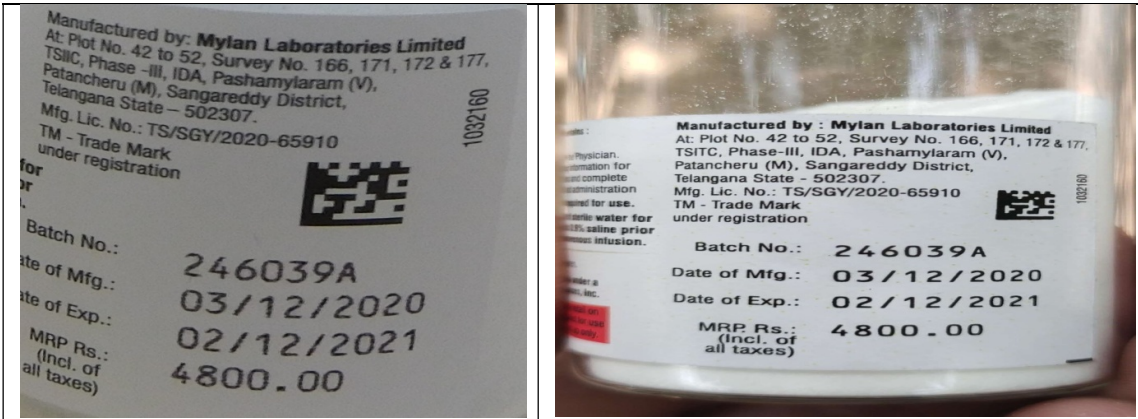
DIRECTOR GENERAL

ANNEXURE

Few examples of Spurious Drugs made by criminals to resemble products of reputed companies are as follows:

Example-1: Remdesivir Injection (Brand name: DESREM)

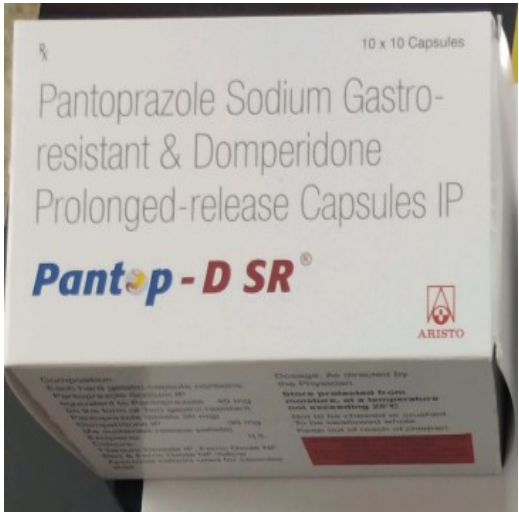

Original Product	Spurious Product
	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Original product contains white coloured lyophilised cake (solid), whereas spurious drug contains freeflowing powder (Spurious drug prepared with Glucose instead of Remdesivir).	
	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Original product label has curvature where as spurious drug labels are sharp edged.	



- The words “Manufactured by” in original product are not in bold, whereas in spurious product they are in bold font.
- Colon (:) has more space from the text ‘manufactured by’ in spurious product.
- The text matter i.e. TSIC mentioned **wrongly** as TSITC in spurious drug.
- Barcode location is not in line with original product.
- There is full stop (.) after the words ‘MRP Rs’ in original product whereas in spurious product there is full stop between MRP and Rs.

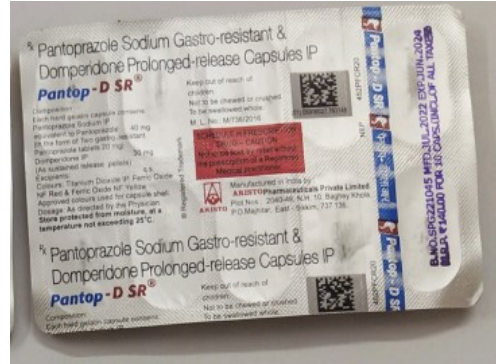
Example-2: Pantoprazole & Domperidone Capsules

(Brand Name: Pantop-D SR)

Original Product	Spurious Product
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colour of the text for product name “Pantop-D SR” printed on the carton is in blue and maroon colour. • Aristo logo is in dark red colour. • Stereo overprinting zone available on carton. 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colour of the text for product name “Pantop-D SR” printed on the Carton is in navy blue and brown colour • Aristo logo is in fade red colour. • There is no stereo overprinting zone on the carton. • Background of the Schedule H statement

- Background of the Schedule H statement is in dark red colour.

is in light red colour.



- Background of the Schedule H statement is in dark red colour.
- All text matter on printed foil is in bold.
- Font style and size of the overprinted details Batch number, MRP, MFG and EXP (with stereo) are same



- Background of the Schedule H statement is in light red colour.
- All text matter on printed foil is not bold.
- Font style and size of the overprinted details Batch number, MRP, MFG and EXP, with stereo, have different font style.




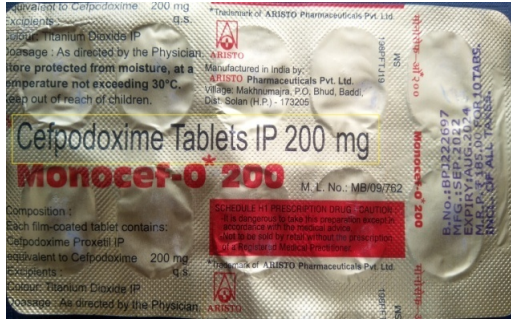
- On Lid foil Pantop DSR is in blue colour shade and maroon colour.
- Lid foil colour is bright gold colour.



- On Lid foil Pantop DSR is in greenish colour shade and maroon colour. Font size of text matter is different from that of the original.
- Lid foil colour is light golden colour

 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capsules contain two mini-tablets of Pantoprazole Sodium and cream colour spherical pellets of Domperidone. 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capsules have no tablets of Pantoprazole Sodium and contain only blue, orange and white coloured pellets available.
---	--

Example-3: Cefpodoxime Tablets (Monocef-O 200)

Original Product	Spurious Product
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generic Name text is not bold. • Colour of brand name is dark red colour. • Overprinted ink is dark navy blue colour • : (Semi column) is not printed after the caution in the red box. 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generic Name text is bold. • Colour of brand name is light red colour. • Overprinted ink is light navy blue colour • : (Semi column) is printed after the caution in the red box.
<p>The text 'ARISTO Pharmaceuticals Pvt. Ltd.' Printed below the red box in spurious drug is different from the original.</p>	