

Recommendations on shortage management

EMA webinar on shortages: putting patients first
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Ancel-la Santos
Head of Food, Health and Chemicals Safety (BEUC)

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The impact of shortages on consumers

- Medicine shortages are a **major and growing problem across Europe**
- Consumer surveys in four countries show **that nearly 40% of households faced a medicine shortage** between January 2023 and January 2024 ⁽¹⁾
 - 53% reported that the shortage negatively impacted their health
 - 27% faced additional costs
- **BEUC members are actively addressing this issue** through national surveys and consumer communications, helping them understand the causes, risks, and ways to stay informed during shortages

1) Surveys conducted in Belgium, Italy, Portugal and Spain <https://www.euroconsumers.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Drug-shortages-survey-report.pdf>

Shortages and online risks for consumers

- Survey data show that 24% of patients who struggled to obtain their medicine tried to find it online ⁽²⁾
- **Need to be watchful:**
 - Risk of running into illegal sellers that try to capitalise on the situation
 - Medicines in shortage have been found to be widely available online without a required prescription or the involvement of a healthcare professional ⁽³⁾
 - WHO has warned that **substandard and falsified** medicines are often sold online or in informal markets ⁽⁴⁾

Awareness raising – GLP-1 RA medications

- ✓ Consumer organisations have helped to warn the public about fake medicines and their risks



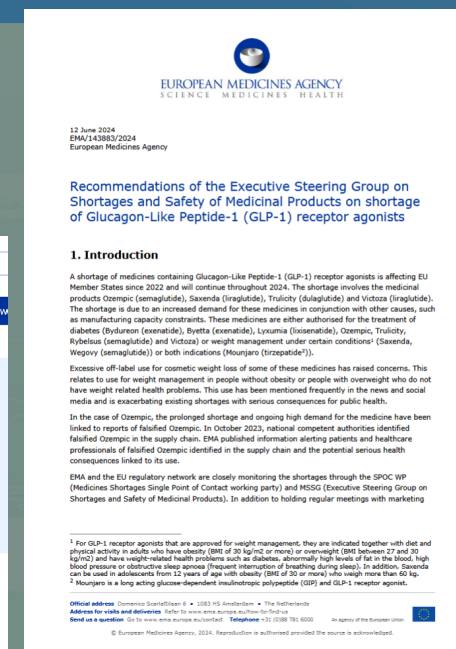
Source: OCU, Alerta: Inyecciones adelgazantes falsificadas ¡cuidado!, October 2023



Source: Testachats/Testaankoop, News: Pénurie d'Ozempic et faux stylos : des réformes sont urgentes pour mieux protéger les consommateurs, March 2024



Source: EMA website



Source: EMA website

What can consumers do

- Stay on top of your **prescription**
 - In case of shortage, seek advice from your **doctor or pharmacist** on safe and appropriate alternatives
 - Check the recommendations of the **national medicine agency** and EMA
 - When buying online, look for the **common EU logo** and check that the website appears on the [national register of authorised sellers](#)
 - Report **suspicious products** to the national competent authority
- Full recommendations from the EMA and Heads of Medicines Agencies
<https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/news/warning-about-sharp-rise-illegal-medicines-sold-eu>



Policy recommendations

- Enable **consumer reporting** on medicine shortages
- Establish user-friendly **public databases** on shortages
- Ensure **consultation** on mitigation measures
- Introduce measures that contribute to **shortage prevention**
- Strengthen monitoring of rising **online marketplaces**

References

- 1) Euroconsumers. Out of stock! Not available when you need it the most: the case of drug shortages. July 2024. Available at <https://www.euroconsumers.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Drug-shortages-survey-report-2.pdf>
- 2) Picton C, Davies J, and Warner B. Medicines Shortages: Solutions for empty shelves. Royal, Pharmaceutical Society, November 2024. Available at <https://www.rpharms.com/medicinesshortages#fig3>
- 3) Almomani H, Raza A, Patel N, Donyai P. Reasons that lead people to buy prescription medicines on the internet: a systematic review. Front Pharmacol. 2023 Aug 31;14:1239507. doi: 10.3389/fphar.2023.1239507. PMID: 37719862; PMCID: PMC10501782.
- 4) World Health Organization, Substandard and falsified medical products, 3 December 2024. Available at <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/substandard-and-falsified-medical-products>



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Thank you for your attention

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