



**Royal
Pharmaceutical
Society**
of Great Britain

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News release

For immediate release

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RPSGB WARNS AGAINST COUNTERFEIT DRUGS FOR SWINE FLU

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (RPSGB) today issued a warning to the public about the risks of buying online medicines for swine influenza, such as Tamiflu or Relenza.

David Pruce, RPSGB Director of Policy said:

“With the current fears about swine flu, we are concerned that unscrupulous people are exploiting the public's fears about swine flu by offering to sell the antiviral drugs Tamiflu and Relenza over the internet.

“This is a golden opportunity for counterfeiters to offer fake supplies of these drugs. People can be at real risk if they buy medicines from unknown sources.

“In particular, the public should not be taken in by spam e-mails offering to supply Tamiflu or Relenza. Most of the drugs offered in this way turn out to be counterfeit and may contain anything from sugar to more dangerous substances that can seriously put health at risk.

“The public should also be reminded that it is never a good idea to obtain a prescription-only medicine without a valid prescription. The medicine may not be suitable for you or could result in unpleasant side-effects or serious health risks.

“If you have any concerns about swine flu, or think you may be infected, stay at home and seek advice from your GP or NHS Direct.”

Ends

**For media enquiries please contact the
Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain's Public Relations Unit
020 7572 2653**

Notes to Editors

The symptoms of swine influenza in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human seasonal influenza infection and include fever, fatigue, lack of appetite, coughing and sore throat. Some people with swine flu have also reported vomiting and diarrhoea. For more detail, please contact the Health Protection Agency www.hpa.org.uk

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain is the professional and regulatory body for pharmacists in England, Scotland and Wales. It also regulates pharmacy technicians on a voluntary basis, which is expected to become statutory under anticipated legislation.

The primary objectives of the RPSGB are to lead, regulate, develop and represent the profession of pharmacy. The RPSGB leads and supports the development of the profession within the context of the public benefit. This includes the advancement of science, practice, education and knowledge in pharmacy. In addition, it promotes the profession's policies and views to a range of external stakeholders in a number of different forums.

Following the publication in 2007 of the Government White Paper *Trust, Assurance and Safety - The Regulation of Health Professionals in the 21st Century*, the RPSGB is working towards the demerger of its regulatory and professional roles. This will see the establishment of a new General Pharmaceutical Council and a new professional body for pharmacy in 2010.

For further information about the RPSGB visit www.rpsgb.org.