How can I differentiate counterfeit/spurious medicines from genuine ones?

Medicines that have been manufactured or packaged fraudulently are referred to as counterfeit/spurious. According to WHO, approx. 10% of global medicines are fake, causing over a million deaths each year, and endangering patient safety. Reasons for harm can range from, look-alike-sound-alike names, to wrong salt or manufacturing defects.

Some tips to help identify fake medicines:

1. **Checklist for product authenticity:** Check the name of the manufacturer/ brand name & details of the marketing agent, batch number, manufacturing & expiry dates, name and strength of the salt, storage instructions, and QR codes. Be cautious of unfamiliar details. Counterfeit drugs may have inaccurate or missing details.
2. **Packaging and labeling:** Examine the packaging and labeling for signs of poor quality, such as spelling errors and blurry printing. Look for broken seals, incorrect logos, or other security features that are commonly found on original products.
3. **Usage & safety information:** Check the dosage, active ingredients, and storage & safety instructions. Original medications have clear safety information on side effects and how to use them.
4. **Product MRP:** Be cautious if the price of the drug seems too good to be true. Counterfeiters may offer lower prices to attract buyers.
5. **Physical features:** Inspect the physical appearance of the medicine such as color, weight, shape, size, and markings. Be cautious if the medicines look unusually soft, crumbly, damaged, wet, or different from earlier purchases.

Consuming spurious medicines may result in ineffective treatment, and side effects or create further harm to your body/functions.

To stay safe purchase medicines only from reputable and authorized sources, such as licensed pharmacies or healthcare providers. When in doubt, consult a healthcare professional.

To know more:
- What is Medication Safety
- 6 Common Medication Errors

Your Health, Your Responsibility