

Covid-19 has its crooks; beware of Internet-vaccine purchase offers!

Press release of the French National Academy of Medicine

April 27, 2021

Vaccines against Covid-19, developed in a record time thanks to an exceptional international scientific mobilization, are our best weapon to get out of the health crisis that has paralyzed the world for over one year. The clear decline of the epidemic in countries that have massively vaccinated (Israel, United Kingdom, United States) confirms the hopes that they raise, and has led the French National Academy of Medicine to reiterate its call for an acceleration of the vaccination campaign in France [1]. However, the legitimate impatience of the public and the difficulties in the supply of vaccines, amplified by an intense daily media coverage, induce a climate of anxiety in the population, conducive to the spread of rumors and the occurrence of scams. Not caring at all about individuals, populations and global health, criminal groups do not hesitate, for profit, to produce and distribute falsified vaccines, which are at best unprotective and at worst toxic.

Since the start of 2021, fake vaccines have been identified on several continents [2]:

- in southern countries, they are illegally imported, distributed and administered in parallel circuits (private clinics, "natural medicine" centers, companies...) [3]. Thousands of people have already received one or more injections of these adulterated vaccines [4].
- in northern countries, they are sold on the Internet [5], in particular via the dark Web, for up to US \$ 1000 each dose.

This scandalous drift endangers patients' lives, compromises the fight against Covid-19 and affects confidence in vaccination. In line with its commitment against falsified medical products [6], **the French National Academy of Medicine:**

- denounces the criminal trafficking of falsified vaccines;
- urges all eligible persons to get vaccinated as soon as possible on approved sites and to beware of misleading and unsafe proposals made on the Internet;
- recalls that the legal, safe and secure pharmaceutical channel guarantees the supply of hospitals, vaccination centers, doctors' offices and dispensary pharmacies with only authentic vaccines;
- urges the population to refuse any offer to buy vaccines on the Internet or through any other parallel channel;
- encourages anyone who has doubts or questions about vaccination against Covid-19 to contact the local health professionals they trust.

1. Press release of the French National Academy of Medicine. "Accelerating vaccination against Covid-19 ", April 12, 2021. <https://www.academie-medecine.fr/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/21.4.12-Accelerer-la-vaccination-anti-Covid.pdf>
2. Foundation of the French Academy of Medicine. "Beware of Fake Covid-19 Vaccines", February 24, 2021. <https://fam.fr/coronavirus/attention-aux-faux-vaccins-contre-la-covid-19/>
3. Mexico, Pan American Region of the World Health Organization, WHO Medical Product Alert No. 2/2021, March 26, 2021. <https://www.who.int/es/news/item/26-03-2021-medical-product-alert-n-2-2021-falsified-covid-19-vaccine-bnt162b2>
4. Police in Ecuador shut down clinic that injected thousands with fake Covid-19 vaccine, January 27, 2021. <https://time.com/5933689/ecuador-covid-19-vaccine-scam/>
5. Warning from the Swiss Agency for Therapeutic Products, Swissmedic, January 11, 2021. https://www.swissmedic.ch/swissmedic/fr/home/medicaments-a-usage-humain/surveillance-du-marche/medicaments-par-internet/mise-en-garde-au-sujet-des-medicaments-achetes-sur-internet/impfstoffe_internet.html
6. Furthering the fight against falsified and substandard medical products. A call to action by IAP member academies. Interacademy Partnership, November 26, 2020. <https://www.academie-medecine.fr/poursuivre-la-lutte-contre-les-produits-medicaux-falsifies-et-de-qualite-inferieure-un-appel-a-laction-des-academies-membres-de-liap/>