Press release: Freshers warned against self-prescribing: you're not doctors yet

As another academic year begins, freshers and university students are being warned of the possible dangers to their health from self-prescribing and self-medicating with powerful prescription medicines.

The purchasing of prescription only medicines such as anti-anxiety medicines and benzodiazepines outside the regulated supply chain remains prevalent despite repeated warnings against self-medication.

When buying medicines outside the regulated supply chain you risk ending up with potentially dangerous or useless unlicensed medicines sold by illegal online suppliers. It also increases the risk of being ripped off through credit card fraud or having your identity stolen.

MHRA is running the #FakeMeds campaign to help students protect their health and money, with tips on how to avoid potentially dangerous or useless medicines sold by illegal online suppliers.

MHRA Head of Enforcement, Alastair Jeffrey, said:

> Purchasing medicines outside the regulated supply chain has inherent dangers as there is no assurance of quality and standards. Medicines purchased in this way could have the wrong active ingredient, no active ingredient, or indeed the incorrect dosage.
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> Prescription only medicines are, by their very nature, potent and should only be prescribed by a doctor or appropriate healthcare professional. We would advise people not to buy medicines from unregulated sources as they pose a danger to their health.
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> Self-diagnosis and self-medication can be dangerous. If you have a concern about your health, visit your GP, get a correct diagnosis and if medicines are prescribed, buy them from a legitimate source.
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> Be careful buying medicines online – criminals are known to exploit vulnerable people by supplying medicines through unregulated websites and stealing their credit card details.

Visit www.gov.uk/fakemeds for tips on buying medicines safely online and how to avoid unscrupulous sites.