

# Adult Health Bulletin



AUGUST 2014

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## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: WHAT DOES THE FDA OVERSEE?

**H**ave you ever noticed a company or product that carried the phrase "FDA approved" on its label and wondered what it really means? The FDA stands for the Food and Drug Administration and is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The FDA oversees related issues in all of the 50 United States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa and other U.S. territories.

The FDA has several very important jobs that impact not only your health, but the health of people around you. It also affects animals through safe use of veterinary drugs and any additives that may be found in animal foods. There is so much the FDA oversees and you may be surprised at some of them.

- The FDA is commonly known for its efforts in making sure that the foods we eat are safe, wholesome, sanitary and labeled correctly.

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This includes almost everything you eat as well as bottled water and additives that may be added to foods. Infant formulas can be marketed without FDA approval but they must let the FDA know. There are some exceptions for meat, poultry and egg products which are regulated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

- The FDA also ensures that drugs, vaccines and other medical devices used for human health are effective and safe. This includes both prescription drugs and nonprescription drugs (also known as over-the-counter drugs). Vaccines are a very important part of staying healthy and the FDA makes sure that vaccines are safe. The FDA also regulates gene therapy products, and products that involve blood or other body tissues.
- There are many medical devices that the FDA oversees. They regulate medical technology devices like heart pacemakers, prosthetics and surgical implants. But did you know that they also ensure the safety of the different dental devices? Amazingly, the FDA also makes sure that more common items like tongue depressors and bedpans are safe for use.

- There are many tobacco products that the FDA regulates: cigarettes, cigarette tobacco, loose tobacco and smokeless tobacco (chewing tobacco and snuff).
- If you wear makeup, you will be happy to know that the FDA makes sure that any additives added to makeup are safe for their intended use. This includes additives in skin moisturizers, skin cleaners, nail polish and perfume.

Without a doubt, you can see the many things the FDA regulates to make sure that the products we use on and in our bodies are safe. A company does not have to have FDA approval before a product can be marketed. In some cases, the FDA may investigate a product after it is on the shelves.

### SOURCES:

- FDA Fundamentals  
<http://www.fda.gov/AboutFDA/Transparency/Basics/ucm192695.htm>
- What does the FDA do?  
<http://www.fda.gov/AboutFDA/Transparency/Basics/ucm194877.htm>
- What does FDA regulate?  
<http://www.fda.gov/AboutFDA/Transparency/Basics/ucm194879.htm>

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**Health Bulletin**

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