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## **October Consumer Advisory**

### **WHAT'S SCARIER THAN EBOLA?**

### **THE SCAMMERS SELLING THE CURE FOR IT**

I'm usually not surprised by the unscrupulous behaviors of those trying to make a buck off unsuspecting victims. But recently the FTC and FDA have uncovered scam artists who are making unsubstantiated claims that products containing everything from silver to herbal oils and snake venom can cure or prevent Ebola. In fact, this week, the FDA sent a warning letter to three companies selling these products.

The FDA says they've had consumer complaints about the number of products making these claims, and that the websites of Natural Solutions Foundation of Newton, New Jersey; Young Living in Lehi, Utah and doTERRA International, LLC, based in Pleasant Grove, Utah, all offer products that are in direct violation of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act because they're being promoted as drugs that can fight the infection.

People spend billions of dollars a year on fraudulently marketed health-related products and treatments that not only are unproven and often useless, but sometimes also are dangerous. The bottom line is there are currently no FDA-approved vaccines or drugs to prevent or treat Ebola. While there are experimental Ebola vaccines and treatments under development, all are in the early stages of product development and have not yet been fully tested for safety or effectiveness. There are no approved vaccines, drugs, or products available for purchase online or in stores; and there are no dietary supplements that can claim to prevent or cure Ebola.

Health fraud trades on false hope. It's not surprising when faced with a life-threatening illness, people want to believe there are miracle cures and treatments when all else seems elusive. But pressure to decide on-the-spot about trying an untested product or treatment is a sure sign of a fraud. Be particularly wary when new cures come out about the same time as a new virus such as Ebola or the H1N1 virus hits. Make sure you do your research on the "cure".

With anything that promises a miracle, a cure, or something is too good to be true; get more information. Do your own research and consult a knowledgeable doctor, pharmacist, or other health care professional.

The FTC (<https://www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov>) and FDA ([ConsumerInfo@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:ConsumerInfo@fda.hhs.gov)) are asking if you have seen companies or products touting these claims, report them to the agencies.

**Denver DA's Fraud Line: 720-913-9179**