

# Avoid buying herbal 'drugs' that promise multiple cures

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Ghanaians have been advised to be wary of buying drugs advertised to cure multiples ailments. Immediate Executive Director for Center for Plant Medicine Research, Prof. Augustine Ocloo was empathic, the regulator - Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) - would not normally endorse any such drug. An herbal concoction advertised as medicines are the prime suspects as self-styled herbalists promote what they say is the same potency to heal different diseases. Herbal medicine is often knowledge which is inherited, and generally passed down through the generations via oral tradition and is also used by spiritual healers.



But it is undergoing reforms and more scientific production. Medical Herbalists are certified professionals trained over a period of six years including four at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. But with the ratio of traditional healers to modern doctors put at 30:1, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO), several more Ghanaians are exposed to uncertified drugs. Prof. Ocloo warned consumers not to patronise plant parts – roots, stems or leaves – street sold by traditional medicine practitioners. “The FDA does not regulate plant parts” he stated explaining boiling and drinking such plants is “a recipe for disaster.” He said the plants can be misidentified and sold to perform a function not present in the plant’s chemical make-up. Prof. Ocloo also urged consumers to examine processed herbal drugs to identify FDA registration. Something as small as a typo error on the label should attract the concern of the potential buyer, he said. He urged consumers to report any such product to the FDA. The Authority which has admitted it faces a herculean challenge in the drug market

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