

FDA finally admits that active ingredient in some DayQuil and Sudafed decongestants isn't effective. How many other commonly-used drugs don't work?

Nearly two decades ago, several pharmacists started calling into the University of Florida Drug Information and Pharmacy Resource Center hotline with the same query: Does phenylephrine, a common ingredient in cold medicine sold over the counter, actually work?

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[A]fter meeting to discuss our suspicions, we began what has so far been a nearly 20-year collaboration to determine if phenylephrine was effective at the dosage available to consumers over the counter, and later, when we discovered it wasn't, to petition the Food and Drug Administration to remove it from shelves. This included a Freedom of Information Act request for unpublished data on the drug and multiple studies that confirmed our skepticism.

Recently, an advisory committee for the F.D.A. unanimously [confirmed](#) our findings. The agency must now decide whether products containing the ingredient should be removed from shelves and drug makers should use new formulations.

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This decongestant is like many drugs on the market that don't really provide relief.

Just ask your local pharmacist about over-the-counter drugs he or she suspects don't work. It's an open secret among many of us who study pharmaceuticals that several ingredients, including ones found in common treatments like Robitussin, Mucinex and certain cough syrups, probably don't work as advertised.

[\*\*This is an excerpt. Read the original post here\*\*](#)