

## Health Alert:

### Self-medication with Ivermectin for the Treatment and Prevention of COVID-19

August 24, 2021

This document will be updated as new information becomes available. The current version can always be viewed at <http://www.health.mo.gov>.

The Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services (DHSS) is now using four types of documents to provide important information to medical and public health professionals, and to other interested persons:

**Health Alerts** convey information of the highest level of importance which warrants immediate action or attention from Missouri health providers, emergency responders, public health agencies, and/or the public.

**Health Advisories** provide important information for a specific incident or situation, including that impacting neighboring states; may not require immediate action.

**Health Guidances** contain comprehensive information pertaining to a particular disease or condition, and include recommendations, guidelines, etc. endorsed by DHSS.

**Health Updates** provide new or updated information on an incident or situation; can also provide information to update a previously sent Health Alert, Health Advisory, or Health Guidance; unlikely to require immediate action.

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Health Alert  
August 24, 2021

**FROM: ROBERT KNODELL, DHSS ACTING DIRECTOR**

**SUBJECT: Self-medication with Ivermectin for the Treatment and Prevention of COVID-19**

The Missouri DHSS has received reports that some people in Missouri were using Ivermectin to prevent a COVID-19 infection. Inappropriate use of this medication, especially consuming veterinary formulations, may cause significant harm. The DHSS is urging Missourians not to use Ivermectin for self-medication against COVID-19. All health care providers who encounter illnesses due to Ivermectin ingestion should report cases to the Missouri Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222.

Ivermectin is a Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved antiparasitic drug that is used to treat several neglected tropical diseases and scabies. Ivermectin is **not** approved by the FDA for the treatment of any viral infection, including COVID-19.

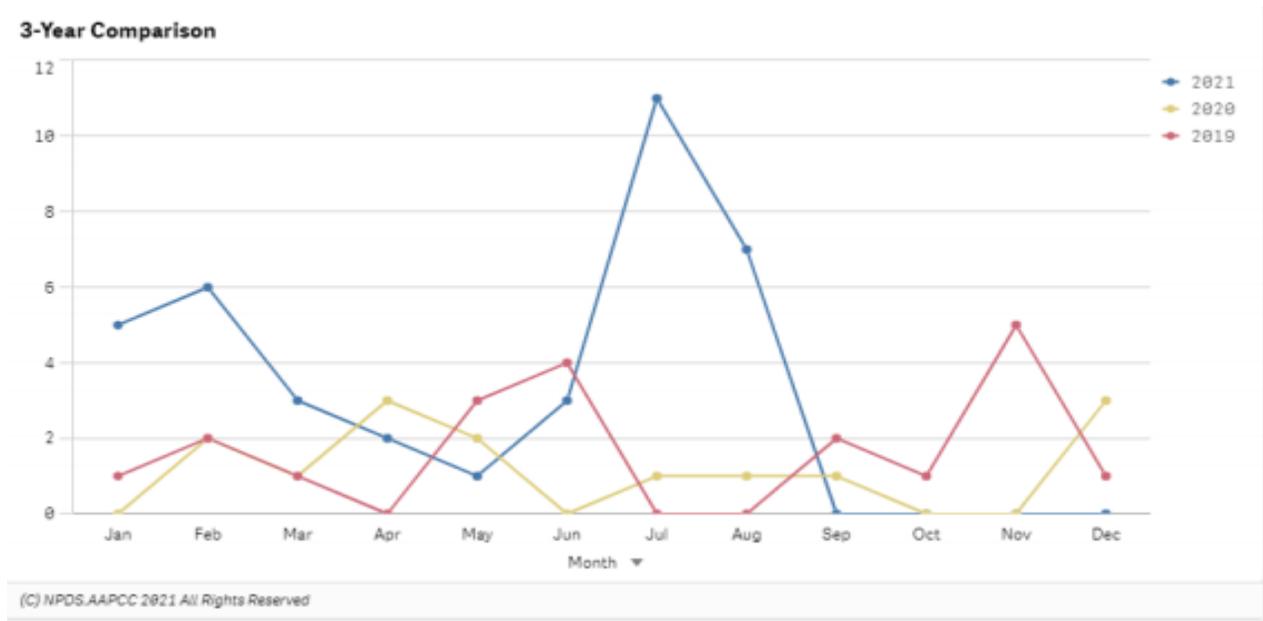
The National Institute for Health (NIH) has recently concluded that there is insufficient evidence to recommend either for or against the use of Ivermectin for the treatment of COVID-19. Several clinical trials that are evaluating the use of Ivermectin for the treatment of COVID-19 are currently underway or in development. The World Health Organization (WHO) also recommends that this drug only be used within clinical trials.

Nevertheless, the Missouri DHSS has received reports that some people were using Ivermectin to prevent a COVID-19 infection. Across the country, in Mississippi, two-thirds of recent calls placed to the state's poison control center were related to "ingestion of livestock or animal formulations of Ivermectin purchased at livestock supply centers".

The FDA has urged people to stop taking veterinary formulations of this drug to treat or prevent Covid-19 after receiving multiple reports of patients who have been hospitalized after "self-medicating with ivermectin intended for horses". According to the FDA, animal drugs are often highly concentrated because they are used for large animals like horses and cows, and such high doses can be highly toxic in humans. Patients who overdose with ivermectin can experience nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, low blood pressure, allergic reactions, dizziness, and problems with balance, seizures, coma and even death. Additionally, the effect of many inactive ingredients found in animal products is not known because those ingredients aren't evaluated for use in people.

The Missouri Poison Center has concerns about the recent intentional misuse of the ivermectin as a preventative or treatment of COVID-19. The center has managed at least 22 cases in 2021 as compared to 2 cases in 2020 where an individual intentionally has ingested a prescription product or a veterinary formulation not intended for humans use.

Adverse effects that have been noted from an overdose of ivermectin include, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Patients have also experienced hypotension, dizziness, decreased consciousness, confusion, agitation, and hallucinations. The Poison Center does not recommend taking ivermectin that is not prescribed to them by a healthcare provider.



Ivermectin products made for animals are not safe for human consumption. Missourians are urged to contact one of specially trained pharmacists or nurses at 1-800-222-1222 for advice if they have been using ivermectin or an ivermectin containing product and are experiencing symptoms.