

The Counterfeit Peptide Red Flag Checklist

9 warning signs to check before you trust a vendor

Most peptide vendor sites look equally professional. Slick design and confident copy tell you nothing about whether what's in the vial matches what's on the label. This checklist covers the nine things that actually separate a vendor willing to be checked from one hoping you won't check.

How to use this:

Pull up any vendor's site. Check each box only if the vendor genuinely passes. Fewer checks, more reason to look elsewhere.

- ☐ 1. **Batch-specific COA, not a generic “purity page”**
A real Certificate of Analysis is tied to one specific lot number matching what's on your product label — not a general page claiming “we test everything” with no batch tied to it.
- ☐ 2. **The COA can actually be verified**
Anyone can put a lab logo on a PDF. Look for a way to independently confirm it's real — a cryptographic signature you can check in Acrobat, or a lookup URL where you can verify the certificate yourself, not just view it.
- ☐ 3. **The testing method is actually named**
“Lab-tested” means nothing without specifics. A vendor should tell you whether testing is UV-Vis (concentration and rough purity only) or something more rigorous like HPLC or LC-MS (which can confirm molecular identity). If they won't say, assume the weaker method.
- ☐ 4. **The lab itself is named and checkable**
A real vendor names the actual testing lab. If a vendor won't say who tested it, or the lab can't be found or contacted, that's not an oversight — it's a choice.
- ☐ 5. **No dosing or protocol claims for RUO products**
Research-use-only compounds aren't legally marketed with human dosing instructions or specific health outcome promises. A vendor doing this is prioritizing sales over compliance — and if they're cutting that corner, ask what else they're cutting.

- ☐ **6. Real, checkable business information**
A legitimate vendor operates as a real registered business with an actual address and real contact information — not just a contact form and a P.O. box. Missing business registration is a genuine red flag, not a formality.
 - ☐ **7. Pricing has a real explanation**
Costs vary supplier to supplier, but pricing dramatically below every competitor with no explanation (supplier switch, bulk sourcing, margin strategy) is worth extra scrutiny — quality is the easiest place to cut costs invisibly.
 - ☐ **8. Marketing language matches the legal category**
Watch for words like “clinically proven,” “FDA-cleared,” or specific medical claims attached to a product labeled research-use-only. Those two things can't both be true — one of them is marketing spin.
 - ☐ **9. The vendor is transparent about their own limits**
The most trustworthy sign isn't a vendor claiming perfection — it's a vendor telling you plainly what their current testing can and can't confirm, and what they're actively working to improve. Confidence without any acknowledged limitation is usually the tell.
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Quick self-check

Checked 7–9 boxes? Good sign. Checked fewer than 5? Keep looking before you buy.

This checklist grades the vendor, not the compound. For evidence grades (A–D) on individual peptides — what's actually been studied in humans versus animals — see the full library at peptidebriefs.com.