

# WisDems: ICYMI - US Sen. Ron Johnson continues to push dangerous and unproven treatments for COVID

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Ron Johnson has spent months discouraging Wisconsinites from getting the vaccine while pushing controversial and unproven COVID treatments like ivermectin, a dewormer drug that has hospitalized people across the state and country. See more below:

Wisconsin State Journal: [ICYMI: US Sen. Ron Johnson doubles down on controversial early COVID-19 treatments, including ivermectin](#)

U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson on Wednesday doubled down on touting early treatments for COVID-19, including the much maligned use of the anti-parasitic drug Ivermectin, even after federal health authorities warned against unauthorized use of the drug to treat COVID-19.

[...]

Johnson for months has advocated for the consideration of drugs unproven to treat

COVID-19 — such as the anti-parasitic medication Ivermectin or malaria treatment hydroxychloroquine — as potential therapies for people who have contracted COVID-19.

[...]

In a health advisory last week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warned clinicians and the public that ivermectin is not currently authorized or approved by the FDA for treatment of COVID-19, and that the National Institutes of Health has also determined there is currently insufficient data to recommend ivermectin for treatment of COVID-19.

Even so, there has been a 24-fold increase in ivermectin prescriptions compared to before the pandemic, according to the CDC.

[...]

Physicians in Wisconsin and across the nation have criticized Johnson and others for touting the use of ivermectin and other unproven treatments for COVID-19, especially given the existence of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines.

Dr. Scott Walker, a family medicine physician in Prairie du Chien, said whether for veterinary or human use, the underlying ivermectin drug is still the same.

“It’s approved range of uses is very limited,” Walker said. “It’s not demonstrated to have any effect on COVID-19, and it is known to be dangerous, especially at higher

doses.”

Walker said Johnson should be promoting safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines instead of unproven treatments. Despite no evidence showing ivermectin as a treatment for COVID-19, Walker said he’s recently heard from a pharmacist who received a large shipment of ivermectin.

[...]

Dr. David Gummin, medical director of Wisconsin Poison Center, said the center has received a slight uptick in the number of calls regarding ivermectin. He said the center has received 17 calls regarding potential ivermectin poisoning so far this year, compared to 10 by this time last year, and 11 the year before that.

Gummin said some people may feel the medical community is trying to withhold information on the use of ivermectin and other unproven COVID-19 treatments. But he said the reality is that there simply isn’t sound evidence to indicate people should use such drugs to treat COVID-19.

Dr. Jeff Pothof, UW Health chief quality officer and an emergency medicine physician, said ivermectin in humans is typically used to treat parasites, such as roundworms and nematodes, and also can be effective against lice. He said the medication is more frequently used in countries with lower standards of sanitation and food safety. In the U.S., he said the medication is more often used in livestock and pets to treat conditions such as heartworm.

Pothof said misinformation over the use of ivermectin may stem from early in the pandemic, when some suggested ivermectin could be used to treat viruses.

[...]

Studies so far indicate there's no benefit to using the drug for COVID-19.

"Anything you take has a risk, so if there's no benefit, and only risk, we shouldn't be doing that to people," Pothof said. "Doctors do not experiment on their patients in the U.S."

He said ivermectin can cause nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. At higher doses, the medication can cause low blood pressure, seizures, coma or even death. Pothof said that while there are new antibody therapies that may help prevent severe COVID-19, the best course of action for people without COVID is to get vaccinated.