

Consumers Can Help Prevent Harmful Medication Incidents

SafeMedicationUse.ca Newsletter

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Taking Life-Saving Medications? Ask for a Care Plan!

Anyone who takes life-saving medications should have a care plan. A care plan is a way to share important medical and medication information, as well as steps to take in an emergency. It can be valuable to the individual, their support team, and new health care providers.

For example, people living with adrenal insufficiency take medications called corticosteroids, which are needed to keep them alive. During times of illness or stress, a life-threatening situation called adrenal crisis can occur and needs to be treated quickly.

SafeMedicationUse.ca received a report from a person living with adrenal insufficiency. The person was not feeling well and went to an emergency department. The person did not have a written care plan from a health care provider that could be shared with staff. Treatment with high-dose corticosteroids for suspected adrenal crisis was delayed for several hours. The person was frustrated and afraid for their safety because they knew that a treatment delay could be fatal.

SafeMedicationUse.ca has the following advice for persons who depend on life-saving medications:

- Ask your doctor or nurse practitioner to develop a care plan. The plan should describe how to manage your medical condition and your medications in case of an emergency.
- Consider inviting a support person to be with you and your health care team when your plan is being created.
- Carry a digital and/or hard copy of this care plan to share with other health care providers. In the case of children, their school should get a copy of their care plan.
- Whenever possible during an emergency, have a support person with you to share the care plan.



Medication safety bulletins contribute to Global Patient Safety Alerts.

This newsletter was developed in collaboration with Best Medicines Coalition and Patients for Patient Safety Canada.

Recommendations are shared with healthcare providers, through the ISMP Canada Safety Bulletin, so that changes can be made together.

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