



Consumers Can Help Prevent
Harmful Medication Incidents

SafeMedicationUse.ca Alert

Volume 3 • Issue 6 • December 6, 2012

Some Eye Drops and Nasal Sprays May Be Harmful if Swallowed!

Many people are aware that medicines should be safely stored out of the reach of children. But they may not be aware that even products that seem harmless, such as certain eye drops and nasal sprays, may be dangerous if swallowed.

The US Food and Drug Administration has published a [Drug Safety Communication](http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/DrugSafety/ucm325257.htm) www.fda.gov/Drugs/DrugSafety/ucm325257.htm warning the public about the danger of accidental poisonings with eye drops used to relieve redness and nasal sprays used to relieve congestion. The Institute for Safe Medication Practices in the United States has also posted information on its consumer website, [ConsumerMedSafety.org](http://www.consumermedsafety.org). www.consumermedsafety.org. Their article, [Over-the-counter eye drop danger](http://www.consumermedsafety.org/medication-safety-articles/item/598-over-the-counter-eye-drop-danger) www.consumermedsafety.org/medication-safety-articles/item/598-over-the-counter-eye-drop-danger, warns consumers that as little as 1 mL (less than half a teaspoon) of such a product could cause serious harm if swallowed by an infant or a small child. These products are available without a prescription and generally are not packaged in child-resistant containers. The product labels may not warn consumers of the danger.

SafeMedicationUse.ca is informing Canadian consumers that eye drops and nasal sprays containing *naphazoline*, *oxymetazoline*, *tetrahydrozoline*, or *xylometazoline* could be harmful if swallowed. Examples of products that may contain these ingredients are Visine, Clear Eyes, Albalon, Otrivin, Dristan, and Claritin. Other products, including certain pharmacy or generic brands, may also contain these ingredients. If you are buying products like these, check the label to identify the ingredients they contain and ask your pharmacist for advice on their safe use and storage.

Even if you're not planning to purchase eye drops or nasal spray in the near future, you may already have one of these products in your home. If so, it is important to store it in a safe location, out of the reach of children. Ideally, all medicines and hazardous products should be stored in cabinets with safety locks.

For more information on preventing poisonings, see our SafeMedicationUse.ca article, [Prevent Poisonings that Occur at Home](#).