



Consumers Can Help Prevent Harmful Medication Incidents

# SafeMedicationUse.ca Newsletter

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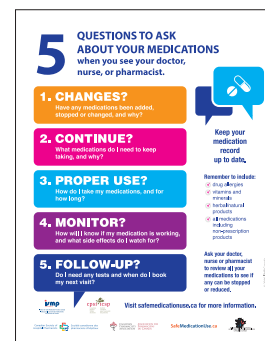
## Sample with Care: Prevent Errors with Medication Samples

If you are starting a new medication, your prescriber may give you a sample supply. This can seem like a good way for you to try out a new medication, but samples can sometimes lead to problems. If your pharmacist does not know that you are taking a medication sample, they will not be able to check that it can be taken safely with your other medications.

SafeMedicationUse.ca learned about a person whose doctor gave them a sample of a new blood thinner. It was not clear to the patient that they were supposed to stop taking the old blood thinner when they started taking the sample. The person followed the directions for each medication and was taking both. Fortunately, the error was discovered in time, and the risk for severe bleeding was properly managed.

**SafeMedicationUse.ca has the following important safety tips to prevent errors if you receive medication samples from your prescriber:**

- **Update and share your medication list:**  
Keep a list of all your medications and remember to add any samples. Share this list with your health care team. It helps everyone know what you're taking and can help prevent harm.
- **Inform your pharmacist:**  
If you get a medication sample, tell your pharmacist. Ask them to update your record and check for possible problems with your current medications.
- **Use the 5 Questions to Ask about Your Medications:**  
Get the answers you need to use your samples safely.



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. This newsletter shares information about safe medication practices, is noncommercial, and is therefore exempt from Canadian anti-spam legislation.