



Consumers Can Help Prevent Harmful Medication Incidents

SafeMedicationUse.ca Newsletter

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Opioids – Be an Informed Consumer

Opioids, also known as narcotic medications, are strong painkillers. They can treat some kinds of pain, but they do not work for every type of pain. You and your doctor or nurse practitioner may want to use an opioid to treat your pain. However, there may be safer options available. It is important that you learn about this type of medication *before* you decide on the best option for you.

A series of 8 short videos called [Question Opioids*](https://bit.ly/ismpcanada_question_opioids) (https://bit.ly/ismpcanada_question_opioids) is now available to help you learn more about opioids. Watch these videos. Then, you and your healthcare provider, working together, can make the choice that will be best for you. The video topics are:

- The Opioid Crisis
- Introducing Opioids
- Pain Treatment Options
- Using Opioids Safely
- Dependence and Tolerance
- Safe Storage and Disposal
- Addiction
- Protecting Yourself and Others



Opioids can cause serious harm or death if not taken correctly. If you decide to take an opioid, be sure to ask these ‘5 questions’ (www.safemedicationuse.ca/newsletter/newsletter_5Questions.html). This will help keep you and others safe from harm.

Read these additional tips to help you use opioids safely:

- [Informed Consumers Can Help Prevent Harm from Opioid Use!](https://www.safemedicationuse.ca/newsletter/newsletter_PreventHarmFromOpioids.html)
(https://www.safemedicationuse.ca/newsletter/newsletter_PreventHarmFromOpioids.html)
- [Opioid Pain Medicines Information for Patients and Families](https://www.ismp-canada.org/download/OpioidStewardship/opioid-handout-bw.pdf)
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* ISMP Canada is grateful to the Best Medicines Coalition and Patients for Patient Safety Canada for reviewing these videos before release.

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.

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