



Consumers Can Help Prevent Harmful Medication Incidents

## SafeMedicationUse.ca Newsletter

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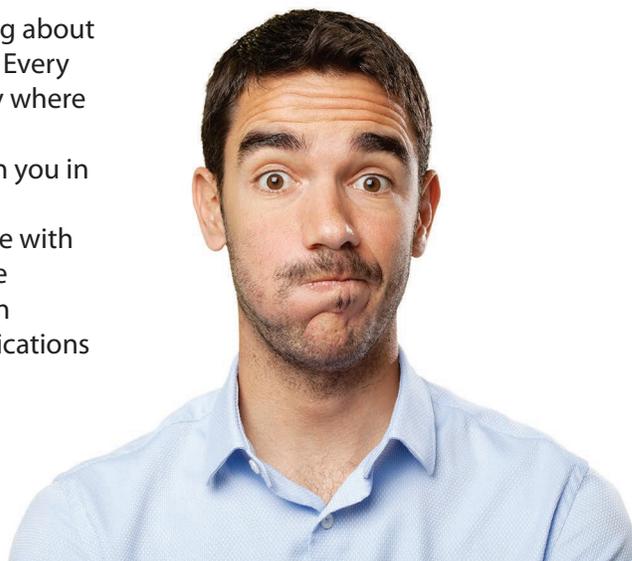
### Don't Be Embarrassed to Talk to Your Pharmacist

If you have a sensitive or private health problem, you may be embarrassed to discuss it with your healthcare provider. But remember—your healthcare team wants to work with you to provide the best possible care for all your health problems. Good communication is needed to make this happen.

SafeMedicationUse.ca received reports from consumers who picked up prescriptions for medications to treat sensitive health problems but didn't talk to the pharmacist before leaving the pharmacy. These reports described medications such as creams to treat vaginal infections, and tablets to treat erectile dysfunction that were not used as intended. The consumers experienced preventable harm. A talk with the pharmacist may have helped the consumers to properly use these medications and prevent harm.

**SafeMedicationUse.ca has the following advice to help consumers feel more comfortable in talking about sensitive health problems with their healthcare providers, including pharmacists:**

- Remember that your healthcare providers are required to respect your privacy and keep your information confidential. You can expect a nonjudgmental and caring approach, regardless of the type of health problem you have.
- At the pharmacy, you may not feel comfortable talking about your health problems within earshot of other people. Every pharmacy has a private room or area of the pharmacy where your conversation with the pharmacist can be kept confidential. You can ask the pharmacist to speak with you in this private area, or to call you later at home.
- You can bring someone you trust and feel comfortable with to support you when talking to any of your healthcare providers. This support can be especially helpful when talking about sensitive health problems and the medications used to treat them.
- Even if you feel a bit embarrassed, take a deep breath and talk to your healthcare provider about all of your medications, including those for sensitive health problems. This can help you get the best possible care.



#### 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.