



Consumers Can Help Prevent Harmful Medication Incidents

SafeMedicationUse.ca Newsletter

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Children's Nutritional Drinks May Have Side Effects

Good nutrition is needed to support growth and development in children. If a child is underweight or malnourished, a nutritional drink containing protein, vitamins, and minerals may be recommended, along with the child's regular diet.

Many nutritional drinks are available for children. Each one has different ingredients, potentially including large amounts of sugar. Some of these ingredients may have side effects. For example, iron can cause constipation in children who are sensitive to the effects of this mineral.

SafeMedicationUse.ca received a report about a parent who added a nutritional drink to their toddler's diet. After regular use, the toddler became constipated and ate even less. This led the parent to serve the drink more often, to make up for the reduced diet. A medication to treat the constipation was added.

SafeMedicationUse.ca has the following tips to help parents make safe choices to meet their child's nutritional needs:

- If you are concerned about your child's diet, ask your health care provider whether your child would benefit from the addition of a nutritional drink or different foods to their regular diet. If recommended, ask about side effects to watch for.
- Read the product label (including the ingredient list) carefully before buying. ***If you are unsure, ask a health care provider to help you understand the label.***
 - Avoid products with ingredients to which your child may be allergic or sensitive.
 - Follow the directions given by your health care provider.
- If your child experiences side effects or new health concerns, talk with your health care provider to determine whether the drink might be the cause.



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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