



Consumers Can Help Prevent  
Harmful Medication Incidents

## SafeMedicationUse.ca Newsletter

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### Mistakes Can Happen with Pharmacy Automatic Refill Programs

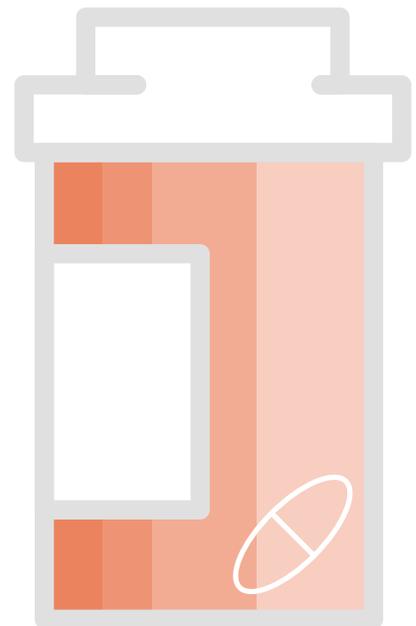
Automatic prescription refill (auto-refill) programs are designed to be helpful and refill prescription medications before they run out. Many pharmacies now use these programs to make the refill process easier. These programs can create safety problems that are important to be aware of. Having an up-to-date medication list and speaking up if you have questions or concerns can prevent many of these problems.

SafeMedicationUse.ca received two reports from consumers. One person was told, at two different times, that a medication had been refilled through the pharmacy's auto-refill program. However, this medication had been stopped by the doctor. Fortunately, the consumer knew about the change made by the doctor and did not take the medication. This mistake could have caused harm.

In the second report, the person was not aware of being asked to sign up or being added to the auto-refill program. The person found out when they were asked to pick up a medication refill that had not been requested or needed.

#### **SafeMedicationUse.ca has the following tips for the safe and effective use of your pharmacy's auto-refill program:**

- Speak to a staff member at your pharmacy if you would like to start or stop using the pharmacy's auto-refill program. An auto-refill program should ask for your agreement.
- Keep an up-to-date list of your medications.
- When picking up your prescribed medications, check that the medication(s) and directions for use are what you expected.
- Use the [5 Questions to Ask about Your Medications](#) to help guide conversations with your pharmacy team.



#### **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.

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