



Consumers Can Help Prevent
Harmful Medication Incidents

SafeMedicationUse.ca Newsletter

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Ask the Right Questions: Your Best Shot at Preventing Vaccine Errors!

Vaccines are important in protecting against serious life-threatening diseases, such as polio, whooping cough, measles, influenza (flu), and COVID-19. There are many types of vaccines made for different diseases and different age groups. Receiving the wrong vaccine, the wrong dose (amount) of a needed vaccine, an expired vaccine, or even the correct vaccine at the wrong time are examples of mistakes that can happen. Asking the right questions before getting a vaccine can help to prevent mistakes like these.

SafeMedicationUse.ca received a report about an older adult who went into a pharmacy to get a flu vaccine. The pharmacist gave the injection, along with an information sheet to take home. At home, the older adult read the paperwork, which said they had received a COVID-19 vaccine. The person phoned the pharmacy and was told they had been given the flu vaccine. They were asked to ignore what was on the paper. There was no further follow-up from the pharmacist, which left the person to wonder whether they had actually received the correct vaccine.

SafeMedicationUse.ca has the following tips to help ensure that you and your family members receive the correct vaccines at the correct times:

- Bring your vaccine history and medication list with you to your vaccination appointment.
- Ask if it's safe for you to get the vaccine, considering your allergies, medications, other vaccines received in the past several months, and other medical conditions (including recent illnesses) that you might have.
- Ask the vaccinator to show you the (1) name, (2) dose, and (3) expiry date of the vaccine BEFORE giving you the injection.
- Ask the vaccinator to update your vaccine record.
- Before you leave, check the paperwork that you receive to make sure the vaccine and dose match what you were expecting.
- Report vaccine side effects to [Health Canada](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/medeffect-canada/adverse-reaction-reporting.html) (<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/medeffect-canada/adverse-reaction-reporting.html>) and vaccine errors to mederror.ca.



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.

SafeMedicationUse.ca Newsletter: www.safemedicationuse.ca – **Report an Error:** www.mederror.ca

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