



Consumers Can Help Prevent Harmful Medication Incidents

SafeMedicationUse.ca Newsletter

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Adapting and Renewing Prescriptions: What Does This Mean for You?

Pharmacists can help you get your medications when you can't see your prescriber in a timely manner or when there's a problem with a medication. A pharmacist may be able to "adapt" your prescription by changing it to better fit your needs. They may also be able to renew (or "extend") your prescription if your medication has run out. Learn more about what pharmacists in your province or territory can do by visiting: <https://www.pharmacists.ca/advocacy/scope-of-practice/>.

Some examples are:

- **Adapting:** If you cannot swallow pills, the pharmacist may change your prescription from tablets to a liquid form, if available.
- **Renewing (Extending):** If you have run out of a medication you've been taking for a long time, your pharmacist may be able to give you a bit more. This is usually done just once. After that, you will need to see your doctor or nurse practitioner for a new prescription.



The pharmacist will work with you to decide if adapting or renewing your prescription is the best option.



These tips will help you get the medications you need in a safe and timely manner:

- Fill all your prescriptions at the same pharmacy, if possible. This helps your pharmacist check if it is safe to adapt or renew your prescription. **Not all prescriptions can be adapted or renewed.** In some cases, you may be asked to see your prescriber.
- Pay attention to the amount of medication (and refills) you have left, to avoid running out. A prescription renewal should be used only as a back-up option—it doesn't replace regular appointments with your prescriber.
- Speak to your pharmacist if you have trouble taking your medication. They may be able to adapt your prescription to make your medication experience better. Use the [5 Questions to Ask about Your Medications](#) to learn about any changes.

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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