

Consumers Can Help Prevent  
Harmful Medication Incidents

## SafeMedicationUse.ca Newsletter

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### How Much Water Do I Need to Take with Psyllium Fibre?

A report was submitted to ISMP Canada describing a person who died after choking on psyllium (a natural health fibre product) mixed in applesauce. The person's care provider thought that applesauce would be suitable for mixing the psyllium. However, this fibre product must be mixed in a full glass of a liquid like water, not applesauce or other pureed food. If psyllium is not mixed with enough liquid, it can form a solid lump in the throat or intestines. In the reported case, a lump formed that pushed on the person's airway, causing them to choke.

Knowing what type of liquid and how much you should take with any of your medications helps to prevent side effects and harm.

#### Tips to help make sure you are using enough liquid when taking your medications:

- **How much?**

Review your medication list with your pharmacist. Ask if there are medications that need to be taken with more than a few sips of water or another liquid. For nonprescription and natural health products, check the label or ask your pharmacist for more information.

- **Water or other liquids?**

Find out what kinds of liquids you can or should (or should not) take with your medications.

- **Before a medical procedure?**

You may be asked to take your medications with a very small amount of water before a procedure. Ask which ones you can safely take this way and which ones you should wait to take until after the procedure.

For more information about the right amount of water to take with your medications:

[https://safemedicationuse.ca/newsletter/newsletter\\_water.html](https://safemedicationuse.ca/newsletter/newsletter_water.html)

**Psyllium must be mixed  
in a full glass of liquid  
(at least 240 mL).**



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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