



Consumers Can Help Prevent Harmful Medication Incidents

## SafeMedicationUse.ca Newsletter

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### Get Involved!

### Residents and Families Play an Important Role in Medication Safety

Older adults living in long-term care are prescribed, on average, close to 10 different classes (types) of medications.<sup>1</sup> This high number of medications raises the risk for medication-related side effects, drug interactions, hospitalizations, and errors. The high level of risk is the reason ISMP Canada has been working with the Ontario Ministry of Long-Term Care to strengthen medication safety for residents across the province.

In Canada, many seniors 65 years and older live in approximately 200,000 available long-term care (LTC) beds.<sup>2</sup> Across the country, residents and their families have an important role to play in the management of their medications. The best possible safe medication experiences and positive feelings about their home are offered when staff, residents, and families work together.

For example, residents who are familiar with their medications can help to prevent errors. Devora, a resident in a long-term care home, did exactly that when a nurse gave her pills that she did not recognize. She asked the nurse to check the pills again. At that point, the nurse recognized that a mistake had been made.

**SafeMedicationUse.ca shares the following ways to support medication safety at your own or your loved one's long-term care home:**

- Ask staff about ways that you can be involved in medication safety. Many long-term care homes include residents and families on committees. Your involvement improves the care and well-being of all residents!
- Watch this video about residents' role in medication safety and learn more about resident and family engagement: <https://youtu.be/r8pfY5eSt0o>
- Share your story at [mederror.ca](http://mederror.ca), if you or a loved one has experienced a medication error in a long-term care home. Help others prevent similar mistakes.

**For more information on the initiative to strengthen medication safety for long-term care residents in Ontario, visit: [ismp-canada.org/LTC](http://ismp-canada.org/LTC)**

**48%**

of older adults living in LTC homes are prescribed 10 or more medication classes<sup>1</sup>

**I would like to be on the committee that decides how they are going to reduce errors so that I can add the resident's voice.**

*~ Devora*

Resident in long-term care

References: <https://safemedicationuse.ca/newsletter/LTC-Resident-Involvement.html>

#### 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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