



Consumers Can Help Prevent
Harmful Medication Incidents

SafeMedicationUse.ca Newsletter

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Medication Changes without a New Prescription? Get It in Writing!

Sometimes your prescriber will ask you to change how you take your medication. The change might affect how much or how often you take the medication, or it could mean stopping your medication altogether. Getting the new instructions in writing will help you to remember the change and will make it easier for you to explain to other members of your health care team.

SafeMedicationUse.ca received a report about a consumer who was taking blood pressure medication at home. A nurse was visiting regularly to check the consumer's blood pressure and to make sure their medications were being used correctly. After one of the nurse's visits, the doctor and the consumer had a virtual appointment. The doctor asked the consumer to increase the amount of blood pressure medication they were taking. The plan was to see if this change would result in better control of the consumer's blood pressure. No written notes or prescription were provided, and at the next home visit, the nurse had to rely on the consumer for information about the change.

SafeMedicationUse.ca has the following tips when your prescriber gives new verbal instructions for taking your medication:

- Get it in writing! Ask for the new instructions in writing or a new prescription to help you remember and make the right changes to your medication.
- Use these written instructions to update your personal medication list.
- Check that the new instructions are on the medication label when you are picking up refills.

Use the [5 Questions to Ask about Your Medications](#) to help get the answers you need if you are asked to change how you are taking your medications.



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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