



Consumers Can Help Prevent Harmful Medication Incidents

SafeMedicationUse.ca Alert

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Canadian Adverse Reaction Newsletter Contains Important Information for Consumers with Allergies!

Health Canada's January 2013 *Canadian Adverse Reaction Newsletter* contains important information for people with allergies. In the case described in the newsletter, a child experienced a severe allergic reaction after Cerumol ear drops were used to loosen ear wax. The child had a known allergy to peanuts, and Cerumol ear drops contain peanut oil. Emergency treatment for an anaphylactic reaction was required, but fortunately the child recovered.

Cerumol ear drops can be purchased without a prescription. The labels on both the bottle and the outer box list peanut oil as a non-medicinal ingredient. The box and the consumer information leaflet also state that the product contains peanut oil and should not be used by people who are allergic to peanuts or soya. In spite of the information available, the parent was not aware that the product contained peanut oil.

Consumers are encouraged to [read the full case report](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mpps/medeff/bulletin/carn-bcei_v23n1-eng.php#casepresentation) on the Health Canada website. (www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mpps/medeff/bulletin/carn-bcei_v23n1-eng.php#casepresentation).

SafeMedicationUse.ca also has the following advice for consumers:

- Before buying, taking, or administering any health product, read the label carefully. Always check the list of ingredients (both medicinal and non-medicinal) and look for allergy warnings. [Read more](#) about What to Do if You are Allergic to a Medicine (www.safemedicationuse.ca/newsletter/newsletter_medicine_allergy.html)
- Be sure to tell your healthcare providers about all your allergies, including food allergies. Some medicines and products used for medical tests may contain food derivatives that could cause problems for people with food allergies or intolerances.
- When selecting an over-the-counter medicine, seek the advice of your pharmacist to help determine the most appropriate product for you or your child.
- Remember that even topical products, such as creams, ointments, eye drops, ear drops, and nasal sprays, have the potential to cause allergic reactions.
- Be aware that arachis oil is another term for peanut oil. Some medicines and natural health products that contain peanut oil may state "arachis oil" on the label.
- Remember that products with the same brand name may contain different ingredients and that manufacturers sometimes change the ingredients in familiar products. [Read more](#) (www.safemedicationuse.ca/newsletter/newsletter_brandname.html)