



Consumers Can Help Prevent Harmful Medication Incidents

SafeMedicationUse.ca Newsletter

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Keep Your Medications Organized

It is important for consumers to organize their medications. This is especially true for anyone who takes many medications, and for those who often forget to take their medications. For some people, organizing medications may mean lining up prescription bottles in a certain order. Others may decide to use an organization tool, such as a pill organizer or a blister pack. Ask your pharmacist to help you choose the best way for you to organize your medications.

Follow these points to safely organize your medications:

- Always keep an up-to-date medication list beside your medications. Ask your healthcare providers to review this list with you regularly.
- Gather all the medications that you take regularly. Know why you are taking each one.
- Carefully read the pharmacy label for each medication. Know when and how each medication should be taken.
- Store all medications out of reach of children. Most medication organizers are **not** childproof.

Example of a blister pack from the pharmacy (left) and a pill organizer (right).



Blister packs are prepared and checked by your pharmacist. Pill organizers are usually filled at home by the consumer or a family member. **SafeMedicationUse.ca has the following additional suggestions for consumers who fill their pill organizer at home to help make sure it is filled correctly:**

- Choose one medication and place the correct number of tablets or capsules in the slots for the days and times when that medication should be taken. To avoid mistakes, fill all the slots for one medication before starting to sort the next medication.
- Always double check the pill organizer after filling it with your medications. If you aren't sure whether you've sorted the medications correctly, ask a family member or a friend to check the organizer with you.
- Keep at least one pill of each medication in the pharmacy's original prescription bottle so that you, or anyone else who is checking your organizer, will know what each medication looks like.
- Ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about any changes to your medications. When a change is made, remember to make the same change in your organizer.

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.