

Consumers Can Help Prevent
Harmful Medication Incidents

SafeMedicationUse.ca Newsletter

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Safe Spaces: Feeling Comfortable to Speak Up

After visiting a health care provider, have you ever left with unanswered questions? People may not speak up because they don't feel comfortable enough to ask questions. Keep in mind that raising questions and expressing your concerns can help your health care team provide better and safer care.

In a report to *Mederror.ca*, a person described receiving the wrong medication during a hospital procedure. The person had been told about the harmful error at the time it occurred. During the follow-up visit, however, their questions and concerns about the error remained unanswered. The person did not feel comfortable speaking up, which left them feeling unheard and worried.

Mederror.ca shares the following tips to keep in mind when you're uncomfortable asking questions or you're not given time to speak up when receiving care:

- Use terms like *I'm concerned*, *I'm uncomfortable*, *It would make me feel better if ...*, *I don't understand*, or *I'm curious*.
- Explain why you are feeling this way. Or just say, *I have a question*. If possible, prepare your questions and/or concerns in advance.
- Bring a trusted family member or friend to your appointment. Ask them to speak up for you if needed.

Additional tips about how to speak up when receiving care are available in a previous newsletter:

<https://safemedicationuse.ca/newsletter/speakup.html>

Learn more about how health care organizations and providers are working to create safe spaces for their patients:

- Safe Spaces: Psychological Safety for Patients
<https://ismpcanada.ca/bulletin/safe-spaces-psychological-safety-for-patients/>
- Speak Up For Your Safety
https://www.cc.nih.gov/sites/nihinternet/files/internet-files/participate/_pdf/English.pdf



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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