

Medication safety and what you need to know

HOW TO SAFELY MANAGE YOUR MEDICATIONS

- Keep an up-to-date list of all your medications such as prescriptions, vitamins, over-the-counter medications, or natural health products. Include the medication name, dose, and how and when you are taking the medications.
- Keep this list with you at all times so that you can easily share it with your health care team, such as in your wallet.
- Keep the name and telephone number of the pharmacy you use in a handy spot, such as posted on your fridge.
- If you have any questions about how to manage your medications at home, speak to your health care team.

HOW TO SAFELY STORE AND THROW AWAY YOUR MEDICATIONS

- Keep medications out of sight and reach of children and adults who may become confused.
- Use cabinets with safety locks or locked boxes, and always put medications away after each use.
- Store medications in their original containers and keep them separate from your family members' medications so they do not get mixed up.
- Do not throw out any unused medications at home. Bring them to your pharmacy to be thrown away safely. Check this link for more info: <https://healthsteward.ca/returning-medications/>

DO YOU KNOW ABOUT MEDSCHECK?

You may be able to have a free one-on-one meeting with a pharmacist through a program called **MedsCheck**. The pharmacist will go over all your medications and make sure you know how to take them properly, including how to use your inhalers, possible side effects, and how to avoid bad interactions with other medications.

You are able to get a MedsCheck at your pharmacy if you live in Ontario and have a valid OHIP card and:

- Take 3 or more prescription medications for an ongoing chronic health condition; OR
- Have been diagnosed with type 1 or 2 diabetes
- Live in a long-term care home

If you are unable to go to a pharmacy, a pharmacist may be able to visit you at home. Speak to your pharmacist or health care team about booking a Medscheck.

WHAT IF YOU TAKE TOO MUCH OF YOUR MEDICATION

Medications, especially medications injected into the body, can be harmful if they are not taken or given as instructed by your health care team. A medication overdose can happen because there is too much of a medication in your body at once. This can happen either by accident or on purpose. Too much of a medication in the body can lead to unwanted symptoms or side effects.

The symptoms of an overdose will be different for different medications. Symptoms may include:

- Severe chest pain
- Severe headache
- Anxiety
- Difficulty breathing
- Confusion
- Hallucination
- Extreme agitation
- Changes in body temperature
- Seizures
- Passing out or loss of consciousness
- Skin color changes (such as bluish tint or red/flushed)
- Abnormal breathing
- Fast, slowed, or irregular heart rate

IMPORTANT: If you suspect an overdose, get help right away by calling **911** or the **Ontario Poison Control Center at: 1-800-268-9017**. An overdose is a medical emergency, and prompt medical attention can help to prevent death or lasting health consequences.