



deprescribing.org

Workshop Series: “Talking About Medications”

Participant Workbook

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Disclaimer

The educational materials and recommendations in this Workbook serve to improve conversations about the safety and quality of medication use for older adults. By downloading and/or viewing this Workbook you hereby agree and consent that this is not medical advice and does not substitute professional judgment.

About the development team

Based at the Bruyère Research Institute in Ottawa, Canada, the Bruyère Deprescribing Research Team is a group of researchers and health care providers working to promote the practice of deprescribing through the creation of evidence-based resources and knowledge mobilization strategies as well as community and stakeholder partnerships. More information about the research team and their work can be found on their website (www.deprescribing.org), Twitter ([@deprescribing](https://twitter.com/deprescribing)), Facebook ([@deprescribing.org](https://www.facebook.com/deprescribing.org)), and YouTube ([deprescribing.org](https://www.youtube.com/deprescribing.org)).

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Introduction

“Talking About Medications” is a series of workshops that aim to help older people learn about medications and to encourage them to take an active role in making decisions about the medications they take. The tools and supports that have been designed for these workshops will help people to confidently manage medications and to have a voice in health care decisions.

This Workbook contains all the resources needed to take part in the *“Talking About Medications”* workshops: “slides” summarizing information that is discussed during the workshops, worksheets to use during the workshops and homework sheets to use between each workshop. The material is organized by workshop number and in the order they will be needed during the workshop. Please have the Workbook with you during each workshop. Have a pen or pencil handy to take notes.

The workshops have been designed to be used with people looking after their own medications and also for people advocating on behalf of someone who is living in long-term care. Throughout the workshops, the facilitator will explain how content and approaches may differ depending on these contexts.

In recent years, doctors, nurses, and pharmacists have become aware of problems with overuse of medications and challenges with stopping medications. They are increasingly interested in hearing about their patients’ experiences with medications and to involve them in the decision-making process. However, some health care providers have more education and experience about this than others. These workshops help prepare members of the public to have medication conversations with their health care providers. Please be patient as you try to have these conversations. Health care providers are also learning how to take your questions and concerns into account when making medication decisions.

Workshop #1

PowerPoint Presentation

Workshop #1: Talking About Medications

Overview of the series

Three 90-minute workshops with
'homework'

- Overall goals:
 - **Share information and experiences with 'polypharmacy', 'medication management' and 'deprescribing'**
 - Share ideas on how to find and use the right medication information
 - Help you have useful conversations with health care providers about medications

Rules of engagement

- Confidentiality and privacy
- Equal opportunities for sharing
- Respectful conduct

Purpose of your workbook

A tool to help keep track of everything you learn during the workshops

It contains:

- Copies of the slides for you to take notes
- Worksheets to use during the workshop
- Homework sheets
- Information on useful resources

Today's objectives

You will be able to:

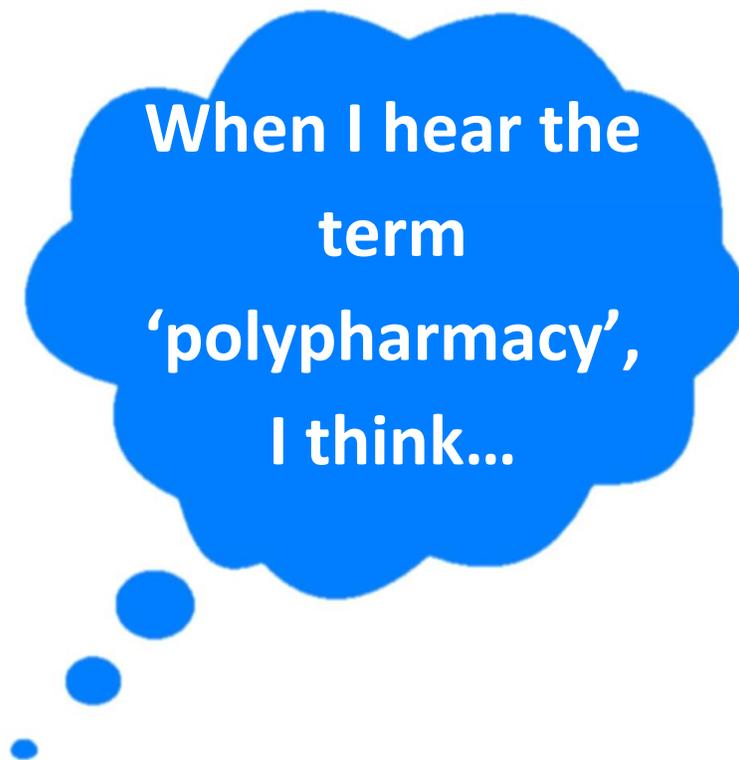
1. Describe the problems of polypharmacy among older adults
2. Describe how polypharmacy is a problem for you or the person for whom you are caring
3. Describe some of the benefits that can result from appropriate medication management
4. Explain how deprescribing is part of good prescribing and ideal medication management

Are there questions?



Getting to know you and what you know

- In 1 minute, introduce yourself and tell the group what you think about the following question



Polypharmacy

- What does it mean?
- What does it look like?
- Why should you be concerned about it?

Medications can:

- Treat symptoms
- Help medical conditions from getting worse
- Reduce the risk of getting a new medical condition



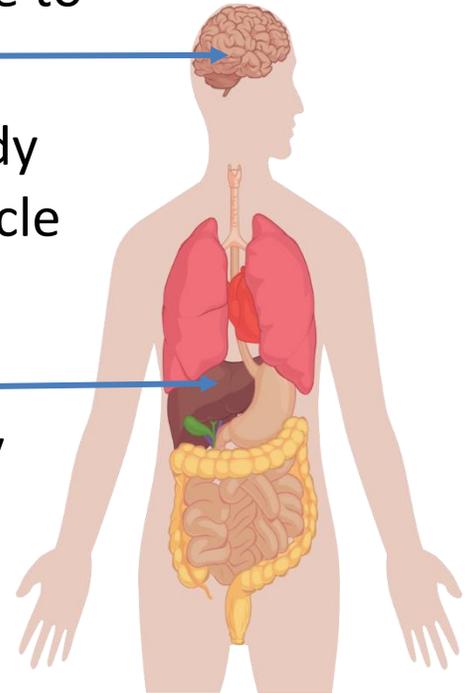
Polypharmacy: Definition

- The use of more medications than are needed or for which harm outweighs benefit
- Particular risk for older people because they respond to drugs *differently*, are often frail, and are not typically represented in research

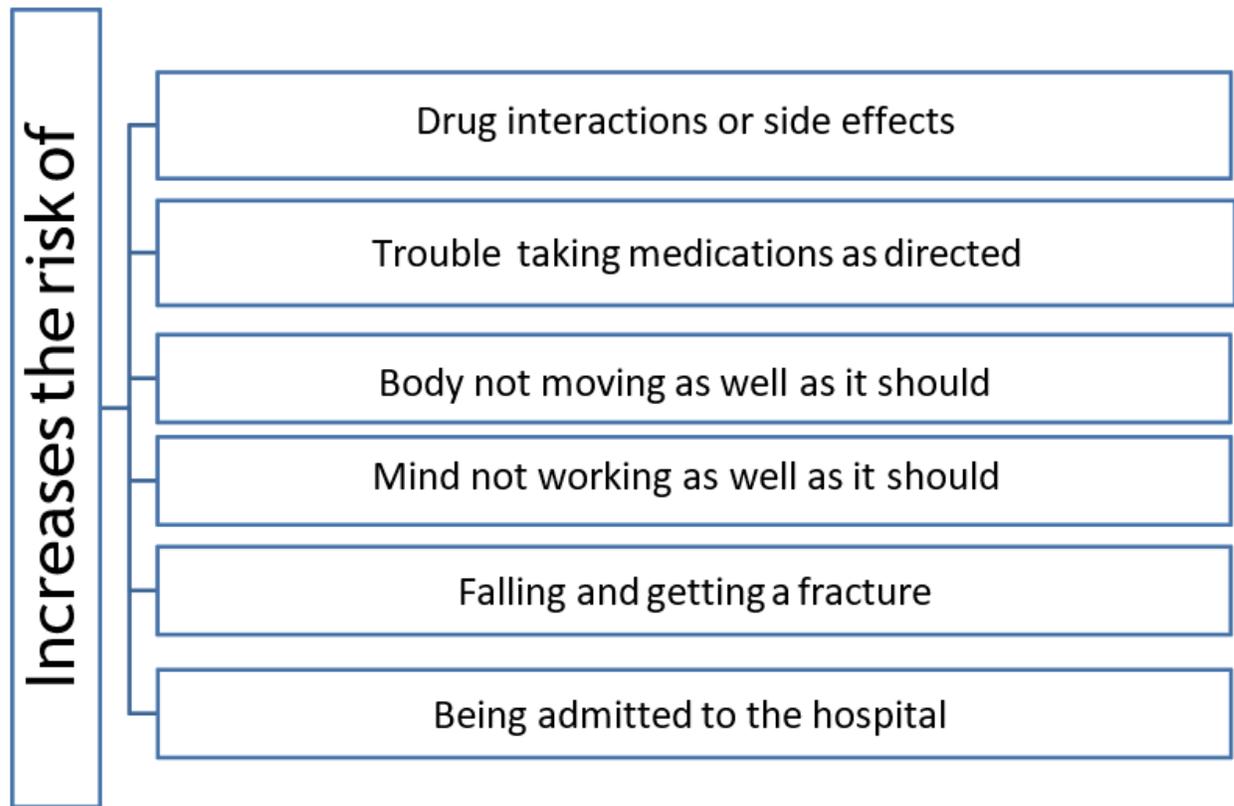


As we get older

- The brain becomes more sensitive to drug effects
- Some medications stay in our body longer because we have less muscle and more body fat
- Our liver and kidneys do not process medications as efficiently as when we were younger
- Our body contains less water and medications can become more concentrated
- New symptoms could be due to the body's changed response to medications



Polypharmacy can lead to problems



And can eventually make
someone feel like this...



Recognizing symptoms in someone else

Identifying People for Medication Assessment.



It's likely that someone you care for takes a **medication** that may do more harm than good, causing serious risks, including **falls, fractures and hospitalizations**.

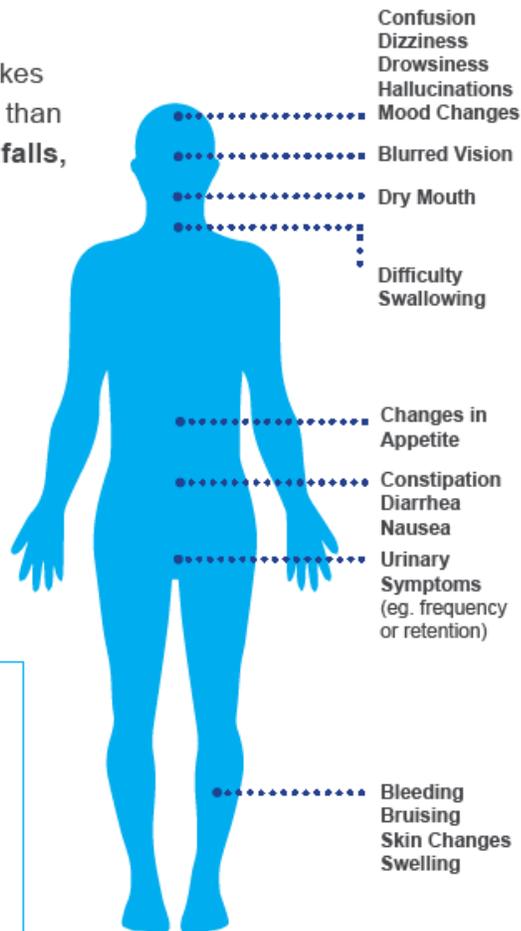
Spot the signs and report possible medication-related side effects in the people you care for.

Your voice matters in making a difference.

 Spot a change (new, worse or bothersome) in the people you care for.

 Report your concerns with nursing staff that may prompt a medication assessment with a pharmacist or doctor.

 Follow-up with nursing staff on resident outcomes.



What is a medication assessment?

A careful check of a resident's medications to see if one or more of them might be causing the problem.

If we know polypharmacy is a problem, why does it still happen?

- More medications available than ever before
- People live longer (more diseases = more medications)
- Guidelines often tell prescribers when to start drugs but not when to stop them
- Increased hospital admissions (with many prescribers)
- Fear of 'rocking the boat' by prescribers and patients
- A culture of adding a medication before trying a non-drug solution (e.g. exercise, physiotherapy)
- People not knowing about the risks of medications
- Patients not knowing how to advocate for themselves

What can you do?



Reflection Worksheet #1 – Participant Experiences with Medication Management

What has been your experience with medication management?

1. Do you know what medications you or the person you care for take? (circle one)

YES PARTIALLY NO UNSURE

2. Do you know the purpose of each medication? (circle one)

YES PARTIALLY NO UNSURE

3. How do you keep track of all the medications?

4. Who is involved in managing these medications?

5. How do you get information about medications?

6. What concerns do you have about the medications being used?

7. Do you feel that polypharmacy applies to you or the person you care for? (circle one)

YES NO UNSURE

Group discussion

1. Do you know what medications you or the person you care for take?
2. Do you know the purpose of each medication?
3. How do you keep track of all the medications?
4. Who is involved in managing these medications?
5. How do you get information about medications?
6. What concerns do you have about the medications being used?
7. Do you feel polypharmacy applies to you or the person you care for?

Medication management:

Definition

A system that supports your capacity to

- Understand
- Organize
- Take
- And monitor medications in a way that makes sure they are working well and not causing problems

Reflection Worksheet #2 – Medication Management Quiz

WORKSHEET #2: What do you think are the benefits of good medication management?

Good medication management can:

	True?	False?
Reduce potential medication side-effects		
Reduce the possibility of drug interactions		
Take up a lot of time and energy		
Make it easier to take the right medications at the right time		
Result in taking more medications than wanted		
Help monitor if medications are working the way they should		

What are the benefits of good medication management?

	True?	False?
Reduce potential medication side-effects	✓	
Reduce the possibility of drug interactions	✓	
Take up a lot of time and energy		✓
Make it easier to take the right medications at the right time	✓	
Result in taking more medications than wanted		✓
Help monitor if medications are working the way they should	✓	

Good medication management also includes deprescribing:

- **Deprescribing** is the **planned** and **supervised** process of dose reduction or stopping of medication that may be causing harm or no longer be providing benefit
- The goal of deprescribing is to reduce medication burden and harm while maintaining or improving quality of life
- Deprescribing is part of good prescribing – backing off when doses are too high or stopping medications that are no longer needed or may be causing harm

Why is deprescribing important and how can we make sure it gets addressed?

- Good medication management involves making clear decisions about what to continue AND what to reduce or stop
- Health care providers can help make decisions about deprescribing (reducing or stopping) when you share medication experiences
- A good medication history is an important first step to communicating a medication experience

Doctors tell us...

- It is challenging for them to keep up to date records about a patient's medications
- Information that is important to keep track of and share with them includes:
 - The reason for taking the medication
 - How long the medication has been taken
 - General feelings about taking the medication

Conversations about deprescribing require communication



Tracking medication history and experience

Important pieces:

- Medication name (e.g. prescriptions, eye drops, creams, over-the-counter, vitamins, herbals etc.)
 - Both regular and ‘as-needed’
- Reason for use
- Directions and how it is taken
- When it started and expected duration
- Who prescribed it
- The effect – both good (i.e. work as expected) and bad (i.e. side effects)

Tracking medication history and experience

Important pieces:

- Changes in doses, when and reasons why
- Medications that have been tried in the past but are no longer being taken and why (a side effect? didn't work?)
- Allergies
- Intolerances (severe side effects)
- Medications a health care provider has said not to use and why

What is considered a medication?

- Prescription medications – such as antibiotics, blood pressure medications
- Over the counter (OTC) products – such as allergy, cough and cold, headache, pain medications
- Vitamins and minerals
- Natural health products – herbals, homeopathic
- Traditional medicines – ones that are specific to certain countries or cultures
- Caffeine, alcohol, nicotine, cannabis

What is considered a medication?

Medications come in many forms

- Tablets
- Capsules
- Liquids
- Eye/Ear drops
- Inhalers/puffers
- Nasal Sprays
- Patches
- Injections
- Creams/ointments/ lotions/gels
- Suppositories
- Vaginal inserts

Homework part 1: Making a medication chart

Homework #1 – Fillable Medication Record

MEDICATION HISTORY AND EXPERIENCE

Update this record each time a medication is added or stopped, or dose changes. Bring this medication record to all appointments with a doctor, pharmacist or health care provider. The list of medications should be reviewed regularly to see if all of the medications are still needed.

Name: _____ Date this form was last updated: _____ Last updated by: _____	Emergency contact name: _____ Emergency contact phone number: _____ Pharmacy name: _____ Pharmacy phone number: _____
---	---

CURRENT MEDICATIONS

Include all prescription and over-the-counter drugs, vitamins and supplements. Don't forget to list any eye/ear drops, patches, creams, inhalers, nasal sprays or injections. |

Medication name and how it is taken (Dose, route, when and how often) (Route: by mouth, in eyes or ears, on skin, etc.)	Reason(s) for use	Start date	Stop date or expected duration	Prescribed by	Additional information (e.g., changes in doses, side effects to watch for, if it helped symptoms, any monitoring at home and what are the results?)

Homework part 2: Reflections

Fill out the reflections worksheet that we can discuss at the next workshop

- What details did you find hard to fill out in the medication chart? Why?
- Where did you get the information to help fill out the medication chart?
- What did you like about the way the medication chart is organized?
- What did you NOT like about the way the medication chart is organized?
- Do you have another way of keeping track of this kind of medication information?

Overview of the resources listed in your workbook for this session

Knowledge is the *best* medicine



BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

Medication Record

knowledgeisthebestmedicine.org



Jocelyne's Story



deprescribing.org

What you need to know about deprescribing



Are older Canadians taking too many meds?

2 out of 3 Canadians age 65 and over take at least 5 prescription medications.

1 out of 4 Canadians age 65 and over takes at least 10 prescription medications. (CIHI, 2018)

What is deprescribing?

When too many medications are taken, deprescribing is a solution. Deprescribing means reducing or stopping medications that may not be beneficial or may be causing harm.

The goal of deprescribing is to maintain or improve quality of life.

Why deprescribe?

Taking medications may be necessary for health, improving symptoms or prolonging life. However:

- Things change**
As we age, medications affect us differently. Medications that were good then, may not be the best choice now.
- Medication may cause harm**
The risk of harmful effects and hospitalizations increases when taking multiple medications.
- Seniors are more at risk**
They are hospitalized five times more often than people under age 65 because of harmful medication effects. (CIHI, 2013)

Risky meds are good candidates for deprescribing

Medications are considered risky

Older women are typically more

What we'll do at the next workshop

- Share challenges you had in completing the homework
- Share ideas on where and how to find information for a good medication history

Wrap-up

- Questions?
- Next session:
- **Contact us:**
 - If you have any questions or concerns
 - If you want an electronic copy of the medication chart or resource list

Homework #1 – Fillable Medication Record

MEDICATION HISTORY AND EXPERIENCE

Update this record each time a medication is added or stopped, or dose changes. Bring this medication record to all appointments with a doctor, pharmacist or health care provider. The list of medications should be reviewed regularly to see if all of the medications are still needed.

Name: _____
Date this form was last updated: _____
Last updated by: _____

Emergency contact name: _____
Emergency contact phone number: _____
Pharmacy name: _____ Pharmacy phone number: _____

CURRENT MEDICATIONS

Include all prescription and over-the-counter drugs, vitamins and supplements. Don't forget to list any eye/ear drops, patches, creams, inhalers, nasal sprays or injections.

Medication name and how it is taken (Dose, route, when and how often) (Route: by mouth, in eyes or ears, on skin, etc.)	Reason(s) for use	Start date	Stop date or expected duration	Prescribed by	Additional information (e.g., changes in doses, side effects to watch for, if it helped symptoms, any monitoring at home and what are the results?)

Medication name and how it is taken (Dose, route, when and how often) (Route: by mouth, in eyes or ears, on skin, etc.)	Reason(s) for use	Start date	Stop date or expected duration	Prescribed by	Additional information (e.g., changes in doses, side effects to watch for, if it helped symptoms, any monitoring at home and what are the results?)

Medication name and how it is taken (Dose, route, when and how often) (Route: by mouth, in eyes or ears, on skin, etc.)	Reason(s) for use	Start date	Stop date or expected duration	Prescribed by	Additional information (e.g., changes in doses, side effects to watch for, if it helped symptoms, any monitoring at home and what are the results?)

MEDICATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN STOPPED

Medication name and how it was taken (dose, route, when and how often)	Reason(s) for use	When was it taken?	Reason for stopping

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION:

Medications are given :

- whole and given with _____
- split into sections (smaller pieces) and given with _____
- crushed and given with _____
- through feeding tube

*If medications are given in split pieces, crushed or through a feeding tube, always check with your pharmacist to make sure it is safe to do so

Please list any other special instructions/concerns around administering medications (e.g. prefers liquid, trouble swallowing pills, given in juice)

VACCINATION HISTORY:

Vaccine	Vaccine name	Date of last dose or doses
Influenza		
Shingles (Shingrix ©, Zostavax ©)		
Pneumococcal (Pneumovax 23 ©, Prevnar 13 ©)		
Tetanus and Diptheria (Td ©)		
COVID-19 (Cominarty ©, Spikevax ©, Vaxzevria ©)		

Homework #2 – Medication Record Reflection Sheet

Question	Comments
What details did you find hard to fill out on the medication chart? Why?	
Where did you get the information to help fill out the medication chart?	
What did you like about the way the medication chart is organized?	
What did you NOT like about the way the medication chart is organized?	
Do you have another way of keeping track of this kind of medication information?	

Workshop #1 Resources List

Topics: Polypharmacy, Deprescribing and Medication Charts

If you want to learn more about people's experiences with polypharmacy:

- 1) Judith Maxwell's Story from Gardens of Peterborough
 - Read how a retired school teacher solved a medical mystery that stumped twenty-two doctors, neurologists, and cardiologists for nearly a decade. You can also listen to her podcast story.
<https://www.gardensofpeterborough.ca/judith-maxwell.php>

- 2) Case reports and Testimonials from the Deprescribing.org Guidelines Research
 - Watch videos about medication and deprescribing experiences from the perspective of a patient, caregiver and doctor
<https://deprescribing.org/resources/patient-and-clinician-stories/>

- 3) Is your mom on drugs? from Deprescribing Network
 - Read about Johanna Trimble's challenging experience with a family member in the health care system and the compelling story about her mother-in-law, Fervid Trimble.
<https://www.deprescribingnetwork.ca/blog/2017/5/8/is-your-mom-on-drugs>

- 4) Alice's story from JAMA Internal Medicine
 - Read how medication side effects claimed the life of this family's mother
<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/article-abstract/2398403>
 - Web Link to the University of Buffalo Research:
<http://www.buffalo.edu/csa/research/research-projects/team-alice.html>

If you want to learn more about what polypharmacy is and how to manage it:

- 1) Video presentation by Dr. Dee Mangin on A Troubling Pharmaceutical Cocktail on YouTube
 - Explains why being on so many medications can cause problems as we get older
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=87&v=QQkV7yHuQ-s&feature=emb_logo

- 2) Polypharmacy: Optimizing Medication use in the Elderly Patient (Mrs. Archibald's story) on Gardens of Peterborough
 - Full of helpful information, this article can help you better understand polypharmacy, and guide you through the steps of identifying the reactions and the process to take in reducing it.
<https://www.gardensofpeterborough.ca/pdf/Polypharmacy-Optimizing-Medication-use-in-Elderly-Patients.pdf>

- 3) Safe Medication Use for Older Adults pamphlet
 - Learn why it is important to understand and know how to manage your medications, the different types of medications, and medication management strategies.
<https://sinaigeriatrics.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Safe-Medication-Use-for-Older-Adults-Web-2017-AODA.pdf>

- 4) Bohemian Polypharmacy YouTube video
 - A fun video put to song that looks at why medications can be harmful
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lp3pFjKoZl8>

If you want to learn more about deprescribing:

- 1) Deprescribing Guidelines Research website www.deprescribing.org
 - Multiple resources about deprescribing approaches and research for the public, health care providers and researchers

- 2) Canadian Deprescribing Network www.deprescribingnetwork.ca
 - Pamphlet about what you need to know about deprescribing
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5836f01fe6f2e1fa62c11f08/t/5cd44cfd0532e200014444b3/1557417213271/fact+sheet+Deprescribing+ENGLISH+FINAL+web.pdf>

If you want to learn more about making a medication chart:

Institute for Safe Medication Practices www.ismp.org

- MyMedRec App
A free App that you can download on your phone to help you keep track of all your medication information
<https://www.knowledgeisthebestmedicine.org/index.php/en/app/>
- Create your own personalized medication record online
https://www.knowledgeisthebestmedicine.org/index.php/en/medication_record.1.html

Workshop #2

PowerPoint Presentation

Workshop #2: Getting Reliable Medication Information

Overview of the series

- Overall goals:
 - Share information and experiences with ‘polypharmacy’, ‘medication management’ and ‘deprescribing’
 - **Share ideas on how to find and use the right medication information**
 - Help you have useful conversations with health care providers about medications

What we have done so far:

Workshop #1:

- Polypharmacy
- Good medication management
- Deprescribing

Today's objectives

You will be able to:

1. Describe what you need to know about medications and why it is important
2. Keep track of this information in a way that is organized and easy to use
3. Use reliable medication resources if you have questions

How will we do this?

- ✓ Review the pieces for a medication history and why they are important
- ✓ Share what you thought was useful about completing the homework
- ✓ Share challenges you had in completing the homework
- ✓ Share ideas on where and how to find information for a good medication history

Reflection Worksheet #1 – Important Pieces of Medication History and Experience Information

Important pieces to track in a medication history and experience

Information piece	Why is it important?	Notes from the group discussion
Medication name (e.g. prescriptions, eye drops, creams, over-the-counter, vitamins, herbals etc.) – both regular and ‘as-needed’		
Reason for use		
Directions and how it is taken		

Information piece	Why is it important?	Notes from the group discussion
When it started and expected duration		
Who prescribed it		
The effect – both good (i.e. worked as expected) and bad (i.e. side effects)		
Changes in doses (and reasons)		
Medications that have been tried in the past but are no longer being taken, and why (a side effect? didn't work?)		

Information piece	Why is it important?	Notes from the group discussion
Allergies		
Intolerances (severe side effects)		
Medications a health care provider has said not to use and why		

Remember what doctors have told us

- It is challenging for them to keep up to date records about a patient's medications
- Information that is important to keep track of and share with them includes:
 - The reason for taking the medication
 - How long the medication has been taken
 - General feelings about taking the medication

Homework discussion

- What details did you find hard to fill out on the medication chart? Why?
- Where did you get the information to help fill out the medication chart?
- What did you like about the way the medication chart is organized?
- What did you NOT like about the way the medication chart is organized?
- Do you have another way of keeping track of this kind of medication information?



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What do we mean by “reliable medication resources”?

- Anywhere or anyone trusted to give correct and up-to-date medication information
- General tips:
 - Is it written by or an in-person consultation with a health professional (e.g. doctor, nurse, pharmacist)?
 - Is the information current?
 - Is the information the same if you check another resource?

Medication information resources: Online

- Information accessible on the Internet
- These sources can give you information on:
 - Medical conditions, reason for use, side effects, and drug interactions
- Reliable sites:
 - Usually end in .org, .gov or .edu
 - Do not have a lot of advertisements in them (they are not trying to make money)
 - Do not make claims that a product can treat all people or any sickness
 - Often have an “About Us” or “Contact” page that tells you who wrote the information

Wikipedia

- An online encyclopedia
- Information is not always trustworthy because:
 - You do not know who wrote the information (are they an expert?)
 - You do not know who reviewed the information (are they an expert?)
 - May not include new research or information
 - Information can be difficult to understand

Medication information resources: People

- Who?
 - Health care providers include your community pharmacist, doctor, nurse practitioner, public health nurse
 - Telehealth Ontario
(Toll-free: [1-866-797-0000](tel:1-866-797-0000))
 - Be careful of information from your family, friends, or neighbours (are they an expert?)
 - Health care providers can give you information on any of the details in the medication chart

Beware: Television, radio shows and commercials

- Often exaggerated information that is not always supported by quality evidence
- Always talk with your health care provider first (even if it is a doctor or pharmacist sharing the information)

Great sources of medication information:

1. Your health care provider (e.g. physician, pharmacist, nurse)
2. Medline Plus (www.medlineplus.gov)

Let's practice!

Let's discuss the information

- Was it easy to find?
- Was it easy to understand?
- Was the information the same in all the resources?
- Are there any questions you have about this information?
- Where would you go now to find the answers to your questions?
- How would you use this information?

Homework part 1: Adding to a medication chart

Use reliable resources to fill in missing information, add more details about the medication history, and to learn more about the medications

Homework part 2:

Reflections

- Fill out the reflections worksheet that we can discuss at the next workshop
- Based on all the medication information you now have:
 - Do you feel the need to have a medication conversation with a health care provider? Why or why not?
 - Why do you want to have this conversation?
 - Who would you have this conversation with?
 - Is there anything that worries you about or might stop you from having this conversation?

Information expert: where does your opinion fit (as a patient and/or caregiver)?



Overview of the resources listed in your workbook for this session

The image shows three screenshots of health-related websites. The top left screenshot is the MedlinePlus website, featuring a search bar, navigation tabs for Health Topics, Drugs & Supplements, Genetics, Medical Tests, and Videos & Tools, and a COVID-19 information banner. The top right screenshot is the Mayo Clinic website, showing a search bar, navigation tabs for Care at Mayo Clinic, Health Information, For Medical Professionals, Research, College of Medicine and Science, and Giving to Mayo Clinic, and a COVID-19 information banner. The bottom screenshot is the Government of Canada website, displaying the title 'Drugs and health products' and a list of subjects and features.

MedlinePlus
U.S. National Library of Medicine
Trusted Health Information for You
Search MedlinePlus
About MedlinePlus What's New Site Map Customer Support

COVID-19 Information
Get the latest public health information from CDC
Get the latest research information from NIH | Español
Learn more about COVID-19 and you from HHS

Health Topics
Find information on health, wellness, disorders and conditions

Drugs & Supplements
Learn about prescription drugs, over-the-counter medicines, herbs, and supplements

Genetics
Curious about genetics?
MedlinePlus has intro pages on inheriting genetic conditions.
Also available in Spanish.

Mayo Clinic
Search Mayo Clinic
Request an Appointment
Find a Doctor
Find a Job
Give Now
Log in to Patient Account
English

Care at Mayo Clinic Health Information For Medical Professionals Research College of Medicine and Science Giving to Mayo Clinic

Request an Appointment →
Find a Doctor →
Patient & Visitor Guide →
Contact Us →

Government of Canada / Gouvernement du Canada
Search Canada.ca
Français

MENU

Canada.ca > Departments and agencies > Health Canada

Drugs and health products

Subjects

- Advisories, Warnings and Recalls
- Biologics, Radiopharmaceuticals and Genetic Therapies
- Compliance and Enforcement
- Device Drug Interface
- Drug Products
- Funding and Fees
- Use of surface disinfectants and hand sanitizers

Features

- Mandatory reporting requirements for hospitals
- Device Advice: e-Learning tool
- Improving the regulatory review of drugs and devices
- Access to Drugs in Exceptional

What we'll do at the next workshop

- Review the homework
- Share ideas on how to have useful conversations about medications with health care providers

Wrap-up

- Questions?
- Next session:
- **Contact us:**
 - If you have any questions or concerns
 - If you want an electronic copy of the medication chart or resource list

Homework #1 – Conversations with Health Care Providers Reflection Sheet

Reflections after completing your medication chart

Question	Comments
Do you feel the need to have a medication conversation with a health care provider? Why or why not?	
Why do you want to have this conversation?	
Who would you have this conversation with?	
Is there anything that worries you about or might stop you from having this conversation?	

Workshop #2 Resources List Topic: Medication Information

Reliable Education Sources for Drugs and Medical Conditions

It can be a challenge to find credible sources of information when you want to know more about your health or the health of the person you care for. A good place to start your search is to look for websites that end in .edu, .gov or .org as these websites are from educational institutions, governments or non-profit organizations. We have compiled a summary of sources that are available to you that we recommend when searching for more information about medications and/or medical condition(s).

Websites

1. Mayo Clinic (www.mayoclinic.org) – This is a reputable source for health information. It has a wide range of information about diseases, drugs and supplements. (American based)
2. Medline Plus (<https://medlineplus.gov/>) – Information about medical conditions, prescription and non-prescription medication and herbal supplements, including: videos, interactive tutorials and even games. (American based)
3. Health Canada (<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/index-eng.php>) – Find up to date information on drugs and health products, recalls, safety alerts and other medication information.
4. HerbMed (www.herbmed.org) – A database that has free access to the 20 most popular herbs. You can access their whole herb database at an additional cost.
5. National (US) Centre for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (www.nccam.nih.gov) provides reliable, evidence-based information about complementary health products and practices. (American based)
6. Quackwatch (www.quackwatch.org) – Aimed at providing information to consumers on health-related frauds, myths, fads and misconducts. The purpose of this site is to promote quality health information and advise consumers of misleading advertising on the internet.
7. Ontario Pharmacist Association (<https://www.opatoday.com/public>) – Learn more about what your pharmacist can do for you.
8. MedStopper (medstopper.com) – A tool to help clinicians and patients make decisions about reducing or stopping medications
9. Rxisk: Making medication safer for all (rxisk.org) – provides free access to information and tools to help you assess the connection between a drug and side effect

Health care providers

In addition to your doctor or nurse practitioner, there are other health care providers available to you who will be able to address your drug related questions or concerns:

1. Your community pharmacist or long-term care pharmacist – You can call the pharmacist with questions or go in to see them in person. It is always best to talk to the pharmacy that regularly fills the prescriptions.
2. Telehealth Ontario (1-866-797-0000) – Medical advice from Registered Nurses available 24 hours a day. They can provide advice on illness, support with quitting smoking, mental health concerns and breastfeeding.

If you want to learn more about the pros and cons of information resources

1. Reliable Health Information on the Internet A Reference Guide
 - General tips to consider when looking at online resources
https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/johns_hopkins_bayview/docs/patient_visitor_amenities/libraries/reliable_health_information_fall_2018.pdf
2. Evaluating Internet Health Information: Checklist
 - Questions to ask yourself before you trust what an online resource is telling you
<https://medlineplus.gov/webeval/EvaluatingInternetHealthInformationChecklist.pdf>
3. Televised medical talk shows – what they recommend and the evidence to support their recommendations: a prospective observational study
 - Provides information on why these sources may not always be reliable
<https://www.bmj.com/content/bmj/349/bmj.g7346.full.pdf>

Unreliable Sources for Medical Information

There are many sources for medical information that should NOT be used to answer your medical questions. These sources typically do not have sufficient evidence to support their information or have a hidden agenda when presenting health information. Before acting on any health advice received from an Internet source, always check with a health care providers first (see list on previous page). Here are some of the more common resources that you should avoid for medical advice.

1. Television / radio talk shows – Health related TV or radio talk shows (such as The Dr. Oz show) often will provide exaggerated and inaccurate information that is not always supported by quality evidence. ALWAYS talk to your health professional before following any advice you hear on TV or the radio (even if it is a doctor or a pharmacist who is providing the information)
2. eHealthMe (www.ehealthme.com) – This website can be misleading when looking for health related information. It reports single personal experiences from individuals on various medications or with medical conditions. These experiences are from the patient’s perspective and have not necessarily been analyzed or confirmed by health care providers to ensure the validity of the statements.
3. Natural Health Information Articles by Dr. Joseph Mercola (www.mercola.com) – Any health site that is attempting to sell health and drug products to consumers pose potentially biased medical information. His articles also make unsubstantiated claims that oppose medical and health organizations. In general, if a website is offering to sell you any product, there is a good chance the information about the product in biased.
4. Drugs.com (www.drugs.com) – This site has information on specific drugs and has a tool where you can check for medication interactions. However, there is a lot of information and it can be overwhelming. If you use this site, do not make any changes to your treatment without consulting with your health care providers. This is an American website, therefore some information may not apply to Canadian standards. Avoid the advertisement links as they may not be reliable sources of information. The questions and answers section is not monitored by health care providers and the information posted should not be considered reliable.
5. Ask the Doctor (www.askthedoctor.com)
6. The Doctors’ Medical Library (www.medical-library.net)

Recommended Resources for Common Medical Conditions

There are many resources for common medical conditions available. Use the list below for a good start to your search if you (or the person you care for) have recently been diagnosed with a chronic condition or would like to understand it more fully.

Medical Condition/topic	Resource	Description
Asthma	www.asthma.ca	Asthma Society of Canada
	https://www.lung.ca/asthma	The Lung Association
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder (COPD)	https://www.lung.ca/copd	The Lung Association
Chronic Pain	www.canadianpaincoalition.ca	Canadian Pain Coalition
	www.cirpd.org	Canadian Institute for Relief of Pain and Disability
Diabetes	www.diabetes.ca	Diabetes Canada
	www.guidesldiabetes.ca	Canadian Diabetes guidelines
Insomnia (sleeping difficulties)	www.sleepeducation.com	Sleep education by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine
	https://mysleepwell.ca/	Suggestions of how to improve sleep- Dalhousie University
Nutrition	https://www.unlockfood.ca/en/default.aspx	Dietitians of Canada
Osteoporosis	www.osteoporosis.ca	Osteoporosis Canada
Hypertension (high blood pressure)	www.hypertension.ca	Hypertension Canada

Finding Services in Your Area

1. Connex Ontario (<https://www.connexontario.ca/en-ca/>) – offers supportive listening and helps connect you to resources in your community for addiction, mental health or problem gambling.
2. Healthline (<https://www.thehealthline.ca/>) – listing of community resources.
3. 211 (call 211 or <https://211.ca/>) – listing of community resources.

Coverage for Medications

1. OHIP+ (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/learn-about-ohip-plus>): Coverage provided by the Ontario government for patients 0-24 years of age who do not have private drug coverage
2. Trillium (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/get-coverage-prescription-drugs>): Coverage for Ontario residents based on income for individuals with no coverage or high cost medications.
 - Patients that have had a change of income can request to have their income reassessed. This form can be found at:
<http://www.forms.ssb.gov.on.ca/mbs/ssb/forms/ssbforms.nsf/FormDetail?OpenForm&ACT=RDR&TAB=PROFILE&ENV=WWE&NO=014-4931-87E>
3. Seniors Co-Payment Program: Coverage for Ontario residents 65 years + or living in a LTC home
 - Seniors will automatically join on the first day of the month after they turn 65 years old. Depending on income, co-payments differ will differ. To completely enroll the form can be found at:
<https://www.forms.ssb.gov.on.ca/mbs/ssb/forms/ssbforms.nsf/FormDetail?openform&ENV=WWE&NO=014-3233-87>

Workshop #3

PowerPoint Presentation

Workshop #3: Having Conversations About Medications With Health Care Providers

Overview of the series

- Overall goals:
 - Share information and experiences with ‘polypharmacy’, ‘medication management’ and ‘deprescribing’
 - Share ideas on how to find and use the right medication information
 - **Help you have useful conversations with health care providers about medications**

What we have done so far:

Workshop #1:

- Polypharmacy
- Good medication management
- Deprescribing

Workshop #2:

- Keeping track of a medication history
- Using reliable medication resources for information

Today's objectives

You will be able to:

1. Identify questions you have about medications
2. Explain the idea of shared decision making as part of useful medication conversations
3. Play an important role in managing and making decisions about medications

How will we do this?

- ✓ Review homework from Workshop #2
- ✓ Share ideas on how to have useful conversations about medications with health care providers
- ✓ Watch or participate in a role-playing exercise
- ✓ Make a commitment plan to clear up one of your most important medication questions

Homework discussion

After Workshop #2, we asked you to try and fill in any remaining gaps in the medication chart

- What resources did you use?
- What resources could you have used?

Homework discussion

Based on all the medication information you now have:

- Do you feel the need to have a medication conversation with a health care provider? Why or why not?
- Why do you want to have this conversation?
- Who would you have this conversation with?
- Is there anything that worries you about or might stop you from having this conversation?

Useful questions and when to ask them

5 QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT YOUR MEDICATIONS

when you see your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

1. CHANGES?

Have any medications been added, stopped or changed, and why?

2. CONTINUE?

What medications do I need to keep taking, and why?

3. PROPER USE?

How do I take my medications, and for how long?

4. MONITOR?

How will I know if my medication is working, and what side effects do I watch for?

5. FOLLOW-UP?

Do I need any tests and when do I book my next visit?



Keep your medication record up to date.

Remember to include:

- ✓ drug allergies
- ✓ vitamins and minerals
- ✓ herbal/natural products
- ✓ all medications including non-prescription products

Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist to review all your medications to see if any can be stopped or reduced.

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Visit safemedicationuse.ca for more information.



Société canadienne des pharmaciens d'hôpitaux



CANADIAN PHARMACISTS ASSOCIATION / ASSOCIATION DES PHARMACIENS DU CANADA

SafeMedicationUse.ca



5 Moments for Medication Safety



Starting a medication

- ▶ What is the name of this medication and what is it for?
- ▶ What are the risks and possible side-effects?



Taking my medication

- ▶ When should I take this medication and how much should I take each time?
- ▶ What should I do if I have side-effects?



Adding a medication

- ▶ Do I really need any other medication?
- ▶ Can this medication interact with my other medications?



Reviewing my medication

- ▶ How long should I take each medication?
- ▶ Am I taking any medications I no longer need?



Stopping my medication

- ▶ When should I stop each medication?
- ▶ If I have to stop my medication due to an unwanted effect, where should I report this?

The 5 Moments for Medication Safety are the key moments where action by the patient or caregiver can greatly reduce the risk of harm associated with the use of their medication/s. Each moment includes 5 critical questions. Some are self-reflective for the patient and some require support from a health professional to be answered and reflected upon correctly.

This tool for patient engagement has been developed as part of the third WHO Global Patient Safety Challenge: Medication Without Harm.

It is intended to engage patients in their own care in a more active way, to encourage their curiosity about the medications they are taking, and to empower them to communicate openly with their health professionals.

This tool is intended for use by patients, their families and caregivers, with the help of health professionals, at all levels of care and across all settings.

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For more information, please visit:
<https://www.who.int/patientsafety/medication-safety/5moments/en/>



Additional moments for medication safety

- At admission (and discharge) to hospital or long-term care
- At regular medication reviews and annual care conferences (in long-term care)
- When goals of care change (e.g. near end-of-life)

Now let's talk about
shared decision
making

It's about a two-way conversation



<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/effective-communication-caring-older-adults>

Research has taught us...

- Patients do better when they participate in their own care
- Health care providers are more likely to consider deprescribing if the patient or caregiver bring it up
- Making more information available to patients and their caregivers helps shared decision making with health care providers

Collaborative care: The importance of shared expertise



The shared decision making process

1. Provide information about your medication experience (or that of the person for whom you care) (don't assume the health care provider knows)
2. Ask for information about options (e.g. reducing or stopping medication, alternatives to medication or safer medications)
3. Describe personal goals and preferences about treatment options, including medications
4. Make a decision (If you disagree or change your mind, tell them)

What might prevent you from doing this with a health care provider?



What might prevent you
from having a shared
decision making
conversation with a health
care provider?

What questions do I need to ask to participate in shared decision making?

Questions to ask your health care provider

1. What are the different options available? Are there any non-drug options?
2. What are the risks of each option?
3. What are the benefits of each option?

Questions to ask yourself

1. What is important to me or the person I care for?
2. Am I ready to make a decision?

What are alternatives to medications?

- Depending on the situation, you can consider alternatives to medications such as:
 - Exercise
 - Physiotherapy
 - Pet therapy
 - Music therapy
 - Changing the environment (e.g. temperature, dust)
- Ask a health care provider if there are any non-drug options available

Risk

Benefit

Frailty

More medical conditions
and medications

Age-related changes

Known side effect(s)
or risk of side effect(s)

Evidence for ongoing
reason for use
(diagnosis, risk)

Evidence for effectiveness

Risks and Benefits of Taking Medications in the Long Term

Why do you think
deprescribing a
medication might be a
challenge?



What questions do I need to ask when considering risks and benefits of deprescribing?

Pros

1. Fewer drugs – reduced pill burden
2. Less potential side-effects
3. Less costly
4. More patient-centered care

Cons

1. Withdrawal symptoms
2. Worsening of underlying disease/condition
3. Anxiety over what could happen

Who should you be having these conversations with?



So you are thinking about having a discussion with a health care provider about medications...

- What might get in your way?
- Does anyone have ideas of possible solutions?
- What things should you do to be prepared?

What could a medication
conversation look like?

LET'S SEE ONE IN
ACTION

YouTube: "Talking About Your Medications" -
Example Shared Decision Making Conversation

<https://youtu.be/X8HUxu3ASX0>

LET'S REVIEW

1. What were your general impressions?
2. Have you ever had a conversation like this?
3. What did you learn from this example?
4. Do you think you could participate in a shared decision making conversation?

How can we help you get ready for your conversation?

Making a commitment
plan

Reflection Worksheet #1 – Participant Commitment Plan

Shared Decision Making Commitment Plan

Name: _____

Date: _____

What questions do I have about medications?	
Who do I need to talk to?	
How will I arrange to talk with them?	
What do I need to bring? Do I need to bring anyone?	
What are the key points I want to discuss?	
When will I do this by?	

This journey was about:

- ✓ Sharing information and experiences with 'polypharmacy', 'medication management' and 'deprescribing'
- ✓ Sharing ideas about how to find the right medication information and keep track of it
- ✓ Helping you have useful conversations with a health care provider about medications

Wrap-up

- Questions?
- **Contact us:**
 - If you have any questions or concerns
 - If you want an electronic copy of the medication chart or resource list

Handout #1 – ISMP 5 Questions to Ask About Your Medications

5 QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT YOUR MEDICATIONS when you see your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

1. CHANGES?

Have any medications been added, stopped or changed, and why?

2. CONTINUE?

What medications do I need to keep taking, and why?

3. PROPER USE?

How do I take my medications, and for how long?

4. MONITOR?

How will I know if my medication is working, and what side effects do I watch for?

5. FOLLOW-UP?

Do I need any tests and when do I book my next visit?



Keep your medication record up to date.

Remember to include:

- ✓ drug allergies
- ✓ vitamins and minerals
- ✓ herbal/natural products
- ✓ all medications including non-prescription products

Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist to review all your medications to see if any can be stopped or reduced.

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Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists



Société canadienne des pharmaciens d'hôpitaux



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Handout #2 – WHO 5 Moments for Medication Safety



5 Moments for Medication Safety



Starting a medication

- ▶ What is the name of this medication and what is it for?
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Taking my medication

- ▶ When should I take this medication and how much should I take each time?
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For more information, please visit:
<https://www.who.int/patientsafety/medication-safety/5moments/en/>



Handout #3 - It's SAFE to Ask through the Manitoba Institute for Patient Safety

- Like many people, you may see more than one doctor, nurse or pharmacist.
- List below all the medicines you are taking. Or, get a free medication card at www.safetoask.ca

Name: _____

Your Medicines

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Non-Prescription Medicines

(medicines you can buy without a doctor's note)

-
-
-
-

Vitamins/Herbals

-
-
-

Do you have any allergies or bad reactions to medicines?

Emergency contact (name & phone number)

Partners

Canadian Patient Safety Institute
CancerCare Manitoba
College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Manitoba
College of Pharmacists of Manitoba
College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba
College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba
College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Manitoba
Concordia Hospital
Diagnostic Services of Manitoba
Doctors Manitoba
First Nations & Inuit Health
Long Term and Continuing Care Association of Manitoba
Manitoba College of Family Physicians
Manitoba Health
Nurse Practitioner Association of Manitoba
St. Boniface General Hospital
Winnipeg Regional Health Authority



MANITOBA INSTITUTE
FOR PATIENT SAFETY
www.safetoask.ca

Brochures and posters in 15 languages
at www.safetoask.ca

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It's Safe to Ask*

Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist...

1

What is my
health problem?

2

What do I
need to do?

3

Why do I need
to do this?

Rev. 1 Oct 2014

Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist:

1 What is my health problem?

2 What do I need to do?

3 Why do I need to do this?



It's Your Right to Ask

Who needs to ask questions?

- You do! Everyone has questions about their health.
- You are not the only one who sometimes finds things confusing.
- Ask questions to understand how to get better and how to take care.

What if I ask and I still don't understand?

- Say, "This is new to me. Please explain again."
- Don't be embarrassed if you still don't understand.
- Ask more questions if you want to.

Who can answer?

Your doctor, nurse and pharmacist want to help you by answering your questions.

Can I bring someone with me?

Yes, a friend, family member or someone you trust can:

- remind you what to say
- take notes and get information
- help you understand your health conditions or health concerns

Before a visit:

Write down your questions, and things you want to tell the doctor, nurse or pharmacist. For example, what in your body feels bad, where and when?

Before I go home, I want to know information about...

...my health problem

Answer _____

...what I need to do

Answer _____

...why I need to do this

Answer _____

...what I can expect

Answer _____

...who to call if I need help

Answer _____

Workshop #3 Resources List Topics: Conversations with Care Providers and Shared Decision Making

- 1) It's SAFE to Ask through the Manitoba Institute for Patient Safety
<http://www.safetoask.ca/index.html>
https://www.safetoask.ca/assets/english_ista_brochure_fillable_2017.pdf
- 2) 5 Questions to Ask About Your Medications through the Institute for Safe Medication Practices Canada
https://www.ismpcanada.org/download/MedRec/MedSafety_5_questions_to_ask_poster.pdf
- 3) 5 Moments for Medication Safety through the World Health Organization
<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/311155/WHO-HIS-SDS-2019.6-eng.pdf?ua=1>
- 4) Mayo Clinic Shared Decision Making National Resource Center
<https://shareddecisions.mayoclinic.org/>
- 5) Shared Decision-Making in Medication Management: A Guide for Long-Term Care
<https://deprescribing.org/resources/deprescribing-in-ltc-framework/>