



# Medication Safety

## A short guide for patients

### Why do incidents happen?

Anyone can make mistakes and pharmacy professionals are no exception. However, the result of a medication error could have devastating consequences. Most incidents arise when there is an internal flaw in the dispensing system.

### Why do we need incident reporting systems?

To help improve the dispensing system, Saskatchewan College of Pharmacy Professionals (SCPP) is



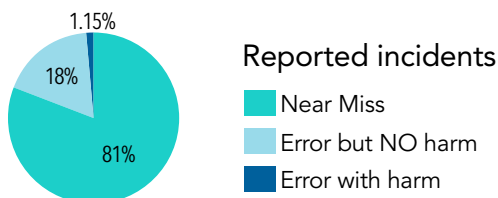
implementing a mandatory, province-wide quality improvement program for community

pharmacies called COMPASS (Community Pharmacy Professionals Advancing Safety in Saskatchewan). It was created by SCPP in partnership with the Institute of Safe Medication Practices (ISMP) Canada and will be in place December 2017. It includes:

- a national database where medication incidents will be anonymously reported by pharmacy professionals
- regular assessment of the medication incidents by the pharmacy staff
- improvement strategies that are created and implemented within each pharmacy
- pharmacy process reviews and procedures to ensure best practices

### What have we learned?

During the pilot phases of COMPASS, there were 7,115 incidents reported by community pharmacies. Of those incidents, 81% did not reach the patient, 18% of the



incidents that reached the patient did not cause harm. 1.15% of incidents reported caused patient harm.

We know that pharmacy care in Saskatchewan is already observing safe practices. COMPASS is being implemented to find even more ways to advance medication safety for Saskatchewan residents.

#### So what does this mean?

- Patients can have confidence that Saskatchewan pharmacies are already safe
- COMPASS will help to ensure medication safety is continually reviewed and addressed
- Pharmacy professionals have the opportunity to review a national database of medication incidents for additional insight
- Pharmacy staff will have improved confidence in safety processes
- There will be increased patient safety

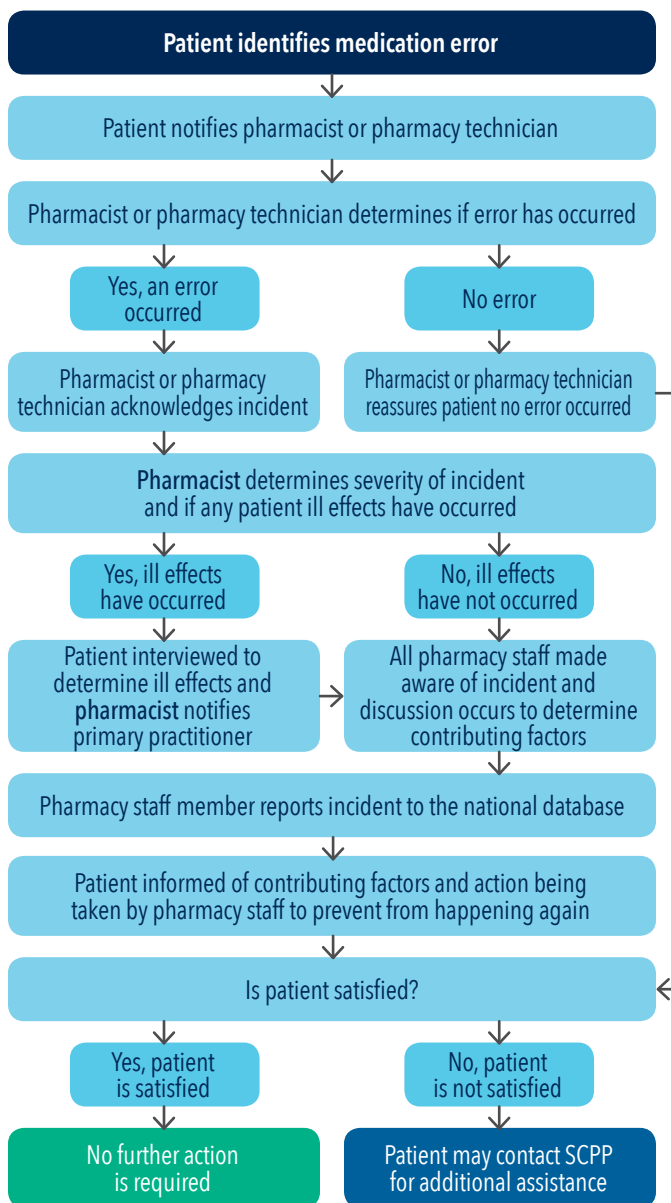
Patients also have a role in medication safety. Ask your pharmacy professional for more information.

### What if I Suspect a Medication Error?

- Do not take any of the medication. If you have already taken some, do not take any more
- Notify your community pharmacist and explain why you suspect an error
- Tell the pharmacist about any ill effects you may be experiencing
- Follow any instructions by the pharmacist to resolve the ill effects
- Ask questions about the steps the pharmacy staff have implemented to prevent the error from happening again

# Flowchart for reporting and resolving a medication incident

When a medication incident occurs, the pharmacy staff and patient must work collaboratively to ensure the incident is dealt with in a satisfactory manner. The incident must be properly assessed; the factors that contributed to the incident identified; and strategies developed and implemented to prevent the same incident from occurring again. In the spirit of collaboration, a flowchart has been developed to assist patients in reporting and discussing an incident and knowing where to turn when they feel an incident has not been properly handled. The patient's first step is to inform the pharmacy staff of the incident so they can assess the error and make any necessary corrections. If the patient and pharmacy staff is unsuccessful in the resolution of the incident, the patient may contact the SCPP office if they choose.



# How can I help to keep myself safe?

The most important thing for you is to be engaged in your care:

- 1 Keep an up-to-date list of your medical conditions, prescription and nonprescription medications in your wallet
- 2 Before you leave the pharmacy, check the appearance of your medication and the label on the bottle or box. If something doesn't look right – ask!
- 3 When starting a new medication, be sure that the pharmacist has given you education and information to take home to read
- 4 Report unusual side effects to the pharmacy
- 5 Never be embarrassed to ask questions to understand your therapy



## More information

For more information, you can ask your local pharmacist or access the information on ISMP's [SafeMedicationUse.ca](http://SafeMedicationUse.ca) website:

- [5 Questions to Ask about Your Medications](#)
- [Safe Practices for Medication Use](#)
- [What information is in a prescription?](#)
- [One Simple Solution for Medication Safety](#)

All resources can be found under "Safety Tools and Resources" on the [Safe Medication Use site](#).

## Contact

SCPP is the regulatory body for the profession of pharmacy in the province of Saskatchewan.

Contact us if you have any comments, questions or concerns about COMPASS:

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