

# FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) For Patients/Public

## What is COMPASS?

COMPASS stands for Community Pharmacy Professionals Advancing Safety in Saskatchewan. COMPASS is a standardized continuous quality improvement program that will be required for all Saskatchewan community pharmacies starting December 1, 2017.

## Why COMPASS? What is the purpose? What are we trying to achieve?

COMPASS is being implemented as a proactive measure to ensure that pharmacies are identifying, documenting and resolving medication incidents. The purpose is to allow for shared learning amongst all community pharmacies, with the goal of preventing medication incidents and ensuring patient safety.

## How does COMPASS help patients?

COMPASS is being implemented for the benefit of patients. It gives pharmacists and pharmacy technicians the tools to identify, document, discuss and resolve medication incidents in order to prevent them from happening again. Because pharmacy staff members are reporting incidents to a national database, not only can they learn from other pharmacies' incidents, but other pharmacies can learn from theirs.

Part of the program also ensures that pharmacy staff members are proactively looking at processes and procedures within the pharmacy to identify any areas that may contribute to a medication incident. By identifying the area of concern, strategies can be implemented to address the issue and prevent medication incidents from occurring.

## Who do I talk to if I suspect a medication incident has occurred?

If the medication error has occurred at a community pharmacy then the first person to talk to is one of the pharmacy team members (pharmacy manager, pharmacist, or pharmacy technician). The pharmacy team member will listen to your concerns and identify if an actual incident has occurred. If no incident has occurred the pharmacy member will inform you of this. If an incident has occurred then the pharmacy team member will likely ask you some questions to determine the details of the incident, whether you are experiencing any ill effects and if so, how to manage them. The pharmacy team will then attempt to resolve the incident.

## What can patients do to help ensure medication safety?

There are many things that patients can do to ensure medication safety.

- Keep an up-to-date list of your medical conditions, prescription and non-prescription medications in your wallet.
- 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!
- When starting a new medication, be sure that the pharmacist has given you education and information to take home to read.
- Report unusual side effects to the pharmacy.
- Never be embarrassed to ask questions to understand your therapy.

## What are the 5 Questions to Ask?

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 do I know if my medications are working and what side effects do I watch for?
5. **Follow-up** – Do I need any tests and when do I book my next appointment?

## Where can I find more information about the 5 Questions to Ask?

Information can be found on the [Canadian Patient Safety website](#) or the [SCPP website](#).



Community Pharmacy Professionals  
Advancing **Safety** in Saskatchewan