



March 17th, 2012

Is It Safe to Use Expired Medications?

As a pharmacist, many of my clients ask me if it is safe to use expired medications.

I let them know that although many drugs stay safe and effective beyond their expiry date, some may break down to toxic by-products.

The expiry date on drugs is not the same as the "best before" date on foods – it is the time within which the manufacturer guarantees the potency and safety of a drug.

Review Your Medications

Did you know that your pharmacist can review your medications?

This helps you to know and understand your prescriptions and ensure you get the best outcomes from your medications. A recent international survey of medication reviews found that they can reduce hospital re-admissions.

Another study, in Australia, found that patients were receptive to having their medications reviewed (in conjunction with a physician) – particularly if they had concerns about their medications or a change had been made to their medications routine, or if they could optimize their prescriptive drug routine.

More and more jurisdictions are authorizing pharmacists and other health professionals, under specific conditions, to issue prescriptions. Current literature agrees that non-physician prescribing is both safe and appropriate, and patients both accept and are satisfied with the process. Pharmacists are also enjoying improved professional satisfaction with their ability to do more for their patients.

Did you know March is Canada's Pharmacist Awareness Month? We are dedicated to providing more health care than you know. If you have questions, ask one of our pharmacists.