

# 5 QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT YOUR MEDICATIONS

## Empowering Patients



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### BACKGROUND

Medication errors continue to cause harm, especially at transitions of care. The evidence reveals a need to empower patients and correct the imbalance of knowledge between patients and their healthcare providers.

A National Medication Safety Summit in Canada identified the need to create a communication tool used to increase patient engagement in medication safety and to prevent harm from medication errors.

### OBJECTIVES

Develop, test, evaluate and disseminate a communication tool for use by patients and healthcare providers at care transitions.

### METHODS

An environmental scan and review of analyses of medication errors leading to harm at transitions formed the basis of the development of an intervention to empower patients.

A communication tool called the '5 Questions' was developed and tested by patients and healthcare providers using PDSA cycles and small tests of change to improve content and design.

The '5 Questions' were derived from evidence-informed medication safety practices including medication reconciliation and medication management.

**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.

Visit [safemedicationuse.ca](http://safemedicationuse.ca) for more information.

### RESULTS (cont.)

Over **180** organizations across all sectors of care at local, provincial, national and international levels have formally endorsed '5 Questions'.

**30,000** downloads of the poster since launch in March 2016.

**4500** YouTube views.



Translated into **22** languages with support from partners.

### RESULTS

A national online survey of patients and healthcare providers (n=291):

**85%** of patients would feel comfortable asking their healthcare provider the '5 Questions'.

**75%** of patients responded that the answers to these '5 Questions' would be very useful to help them understand their medications.

**84%** of healthcare providers would be willing to answer their patient's '5 Questions'.



'5 Questions' Endorsement Map

### CONCLUSION



*"This poster helps patients identify which questions to ask to help improve their own medication safety. This one simple tool is effective, and its use will reduce medication harm."*

*Member  
Patients for Patient Safety Canada*

The '5 Questions', with visible organization endorsements and translation in 22 languages, has demonstrated a shared interest in empowering patients to improve safe medication use.

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Disclosures: Authors of this poster have nothing to disclose concerning possible personal or financial relationships with commercial entities that may have a direct or indirect interest in the subject matter of this presentation. Questions? [alice.watt@ismpcanada.ca](mailto:alice.watt@ismpcanada.ca)