Hospital acquired conditions: Adverse drug reactions

An adverse drug reaction is an unexpected or unwanted side effect of taking a medicine. Unwanted side effects can happen:

• after taking a medicine one time
• after taking a medicine for a while
• from taking two or more medicines at the same time
• from taking the wrong medicine or the wrong amount of your medicine

Common side effects
Most medicines have mild side effects that are not dangerous. It is safe to keep taking a medicine even if you have mild side effects. Some mild side effects are:

• nausea
• dizziness
• diarrhea
• overall feeling of discomfort (malaise)
• vomiting
• headache
• skin rash or itch (dermatitis)
• dry mouth

What does UHN do to prevent unwanted side effects?
UHN has standard practices we follow with every patient. We will:

• make note of all of your allergies
• double check that we are giving you the right medicine in the right amount at the right time
• check your identity regularly to make sure we are looking at your information
• double check your allergies and the medicines you are taking
• make note of the medicines you get, what side effects you have and how the medicine is helping your health

You can find more information on medication safety in the Patient & Family Library. Pick up a free copy of these brochures at the library.

Sometimes side effects may be more serious. Ask your health care provider if you are at risk of serious side effects because of your medicines or health conditions.
Hypertension is having high blood pressure for a long time.

Hypertension is the leading cause of death and disability around the world. It can lead to heart disease, stroke, kidney disease and dementia.

How can I prevent hypertension?

You can prevent hypertension by controlling your blood pressure.

- Ask your doctor to check your blood pressure regularly.
- Maintain a healthy weight. Ask your doctor what a healthy weight is for you.
- Choose to eat fewer salty foods and more low-fat foods.
- Stop smoking and avoid second-hand smoke.
- Limit how much alcohol you drink.
- Take your blood pressure medicine as prescribed.
- Talk to your doctor before taking any new medicines.

What do your numbers mean?

Knowing your blood pressure numbers is the first step to keep or get to a healthy blood pressure. Throughout the month of May, pharmacies across Canada are holding blood pressure screenings. Visit a participating pharmacy or clinic near you and learn what your numbers mean.

Reference: Hypertension Canada: https://hypertension.ca/hypertension-month/whats-your-number

Heart and Stroke Canada: www.heartandstroke.ca/activate/chpi

Health Talks

May Health Talk: How to partner in your care
Date: Friday May 31, 2019
Time: 1:00 – 2.30 p.m.

June Health Talk: Stroke
Date: Friday June 28, 2019
Time: 1:00 – 2.30 p.m.

Location: Toronto Western Hospital
Auditorium, West Wing, 2nd Floor
399 Bathurst St.

To register: Call 416 603 6475 or email Evangeline.Roldan@uhn.ca
May is National Skin Cancer Awareness Month

By Michelle Snow, Librarian, Patient Education, Princess Margaret Cancer Centre

Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer in Canada. One cause of skin cancer is skin damage from Ultraviolet (UV) rays from the sun.

UV rays cause more damage when they are stronger.
- The weather report will tell you the UV Index for the day. The UV Index is a measure of how strong the UV rays are. It ranges from 0 to 11+. The higher the UV Index, the stronger the sun’s rays.

UV rays can damage your skin at any time of year. Practice sun safety all year long.
- Stay out of the sun between 11 am and 4 pm when the sun’s rays are strongest
  - Find a shady spot under a tree or under a sun umbrella
- Wear sunglasses with UVA and UVB protection
- Use sunscreen that is “broad-spectrum” and has SPF 15 or higher
  - Put on sunscreen 20 minutes before going outside
  - Put on more sunscreen every 2 hours
  - Make sure to put sunscreen on your lips, ears and nose

• Get regular health checkups to find the symptoms of skin cancer early. You have a better chance of treatment success when you find skin cancer early.

Talk to your doctor right away if you notice:
- a new mark or spot on your skin
- a spot or mole that looks different from the other moles on your skin
- a spot or mole that is not round (asymmetric)
- a spot or mole that has jagged or blurry edges

Contact us

Our Patient and Family Learning Centres and Libraries are located in the lobbies of the following UHN sites. Visit or contact us to learn more about our information and services.

Princess Margaret
416 946 4501 ext. 5383
patienteducation@uhn.ca

Toronto General
416 340 4800 ext. 5951
tgpen@uhn.ca

Toronto Western
416 603 6277
twpfl@uhn.ca
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