

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Poisoning-related hospitalizations and deaths high among seniors in BC

The Community Against Preventable Injuries, London Drugs and Fraser Health Hospital Foundations partner to provide more guidance to seniors taking multiple medications and reduce preventable overdoses and dangerous drug interactions

April 4, 2019 – New Westminster, B.C. – Every year in British Columbia, the Drug and Poison Information Centre receives 26,000 calls¹ about poisoning, including almost 4,000 drug poisoning cases² that require hospitalization, and approximately 500 of which are fatal³. A quarter of these serious cases occur among adults aged 55 and over.

The task of taking multiple medications on time or not taking duplicate doses by mistake is an ongoing issue among this age group and a contributing factor to the high number of serious poisoning cases.

“Many adults over the age of 55, especially those with chronic health conditions, have multiple prescriptions. Each new drug, vitamin or over-the-counter product that’s added to the mix increases the risk of adverse side effects and medication interactions,” says Nabeel Abrahani a Pharmacist at London Drugs.

A recent poll conducted by Insights West on behalf of London Drugs found that one third (34%) of Canadians aged 55 or older are not taking their prescription medications properly. This includes one in five who admit that they make adjustments to prescription dosage, size, or frequency without consulting a healthcare professional. The same number (18%) say that they have trouble remembering when or if they have taken a medication.

“If you are unclear about how to take your prescription or over-the-counter medications or how supplements might interact with each other, don’t assume everything will be okay - ask your pharmacist or doctor,” says Dr. Ian Pike, spokesperson for Preventable. “Aging is a fact of life, but poisoning from medication use is not. Having an awareness of your medications and how certain drugs can interact with each other can prevent poisoning, even death.”

This April, in an effort to reduce British Columbians’ risk of experiencing dangerous drug interactions, Preventable, London Drugs and Fraser Health Hospital Foundations are partnering to raise awareness among Seniors about the importance of knowing and tracking all their medications to reduce preventable overdoses and dangerous side effects when some medications are mixed – including over-the-counter drugs.

As part of the campaign, patients can [download](#) or pick up a free card at participating London Drugs locations, which they can fill in with their list of current medications and anything else they

¹British Columbia Drug and Poison Information Centre. *British Columbia Poison Control Centre Fact Sheet*. Available from: <http://www.dpic.org/bc-dpic-fact-sheets/british-columbia-poison-control-centre-fact-sheet>

² Unintentional poisoning by drugs, Self harm by drugs, all years, all ages. Discharge Abstract Database (DAD), Ministry of Health, BCIRPU Injury Data Online Tool, 2018. Available from: <http://data.injuryresearch.bc.ca/DataTools/hospitalization.aspx>

³ BC Vital Statistics, Ministry of Health, BCIRPU Injury Data Online Tool, 2017.

are taking including vitamins, minerals and herbal products, and have it reviewed by a pharmacist.

Instructions:

List all the medications you take, such as pills, patches, inhalers, eye/ear/nose drops, creams, ointments, and samples the doctor gave you.

Be sure to include over-the-counter medicine, vitamins, minerals, and herbal products.

Please talk to your pharmacist if you have any questions.

In partnership with




Unsure about your medication? It's time to have a word with your pharmacist.

THE COMMUNITY AGAINST preventable INJURIES

Name of Medication (Example: atorvastatin)	Dose / Strength (mg)	How Much (# pills)	How Often / When (mark with check)				Why I Take It (To lower cholesterol)	Additional Information (Take with or without food, name of poisoning physician)	Date (Start or stop)
			Morning	Afternoon	Evening	Bedtime			

“Our emergency department treats an unfortunate number of people with medication poisoning,” says Stephanie Beck, Executive Director of Peace Arch Hospital Foundation. “We want to help ensure that British Columbians are aware of the medication risks.”

Medication reviews and pharmacist consultations are safeguards designed to make sure that patients take all medications safely. They also help patients to understand the purpose and potential downsides of medications and to avoid serious drug side-effects. Patients taking multiple medications are often advised to use blister packs; a convenient solution to help patients organize medications into easy-to-use containers to help prevent dosing errors and to ensure they take the correct pill at the right time.

Each and every London Drugs location can provide pill packs for up to 4 daily dosing times and up to 4 weeks' worth of medication.

Media are invited to capture photos, video and conduct interviews on April 4th, 2019 from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. with Dr. Ian Pike, Professor at UBC, injury prevention expert and spokesperson for Preventable, and Nabeel Abrahani, London Drugs Pharmacy Manager. Additionally Peace Arch Hospital Foundation Executive Director, Stephanie Beck, is available for phone interviews.

Who:

- **Dr. Ian Pike**, Professor at UBC, injury prevention expert and spokesperson for Preventable
- **Nabeel Abrahani**, London Drugs, Pharmacy Manager
- **Terra Scheer**, Communications and Stewardship for Langley Memorial Hospital Foundation

What: Launch of a partnership between Preventable, London Drugs and Fraser Health Hospital Foundations partner to provide more guidance to seniors taking multiple medications and reduce the risk of dangerous drug interactions.

Why: A large proportion of adults aged 55 and older are not taking their medications properly and/ poisoning-related hospitalizations and deaths is high among this age group in BC.

When: April 4th, 2019 from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Where: London Drugs, 555 6th Street, New Westminster, B.C.

To schedule an interview or confirm your attendance, please contact:

Cynnamon Schreinert
604-802-2733
cynnamon@hartleypr.com

ABOUT LONDON DRUGS

Founded in 1945, B.C.-based London Drugs has 81 stores in more than 35 major markets throughout British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba including its online store www.LondonDrugs.com. London Drugs offers consumers a range of products from digital cameras and cosmetics to computers and televisions. Renowned for its creative approach to retailing, the company employs more than 7,500 people with pharmacy and health care services being the heart of its business. Committed to innovation and superior customer service, London Drugs has established itself as a reputable and caring company and continues to position itself for future growth and development.

For more information about Medication Reviews at London Drugs or to book an appointment visit: <https://pharmacy.londondrugs.com/PharmacyServices/Medication-Review>

ABOUT PREVENTABLE

Preventable is a province-wide, multi-partner organization raising awareness, transforming attitudes, and ultimately changing behaviours. The goal of the organization and its partners is to significantly reduce the number and severity of preventable injuries in BC. Preventable's strategy is based on two years of extensive research to develop a comprehensive understanding of how and why preventable injuries occur throughout the province. Preventable's work is made possible through the financial and in-kind support of a variety of organizations that continue to sign on as partners in fighting the epidemic of preventable injuries in BC. Now in its 10th year of activity, the campaign is an evolution in Preventable's ongoing discussion with British Columbians to change the discourse that preventable injuries are not just "accidents." www.preventable.ca

ABOUT THE SURVEY

Results are based on an online study conducted from February 13th to 28th, 2019 among a representative sample of 633 English speaking Canadian adults aged 55 years or older. The data has been statistically weighted according to Canadian census figures for age, gender and region. The margin of error—which measures sample variability—is +/- 3.81 percentage points. Discrepancies between totals are due to rounding.

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To schedule an interview or for more information including local hospital foundation contacts, please contact:

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