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Reducing medications safely
to meet life's changes

Moins de médicaments, sécuritairement –
pour mieux répondre aux défis de la vie

Your Medications, Your Choice: Making Informed Decisions About Medications in Long-Term Care

Pam Howell, Pharmacist



Managing medications safely to get
the most benefit is not always easy

I believe there are ways to make it
better

What Will You Learn About Today?

01

How a person's medication needs may change over time.

02

Who is involved in managing your medications and how they are reviewed in long-term care (LTC) homes.

03

How decisions about medication use is a shared role between residents, care partners and the LTC team members.

04

Steps you can take to feel more prepared when talking about your medications with the LTC team.



What are medications?

- Prescription medications – such as antibiotics, blood pressure medications
- Over the counter (OTC) products – such as allergy, cough and cold, headache, pain medications
- Vitamins and minerals
- Natural health products – herbals, homeopathic
- Traditional medicines – ones that are specific to certain countries or cultures
- Caffeine, alcohol, nicotine, cannabis



Medications Come in Many Forms:

- Tablets
- Capsules
- Liquids
- Eye/Ear drops
- Inhalers/puffers
- Nasal Sprays
- Patches
- Injections
- Creams/ointments/
lotions/ gels
- Suppositories
- Vaginal inserts

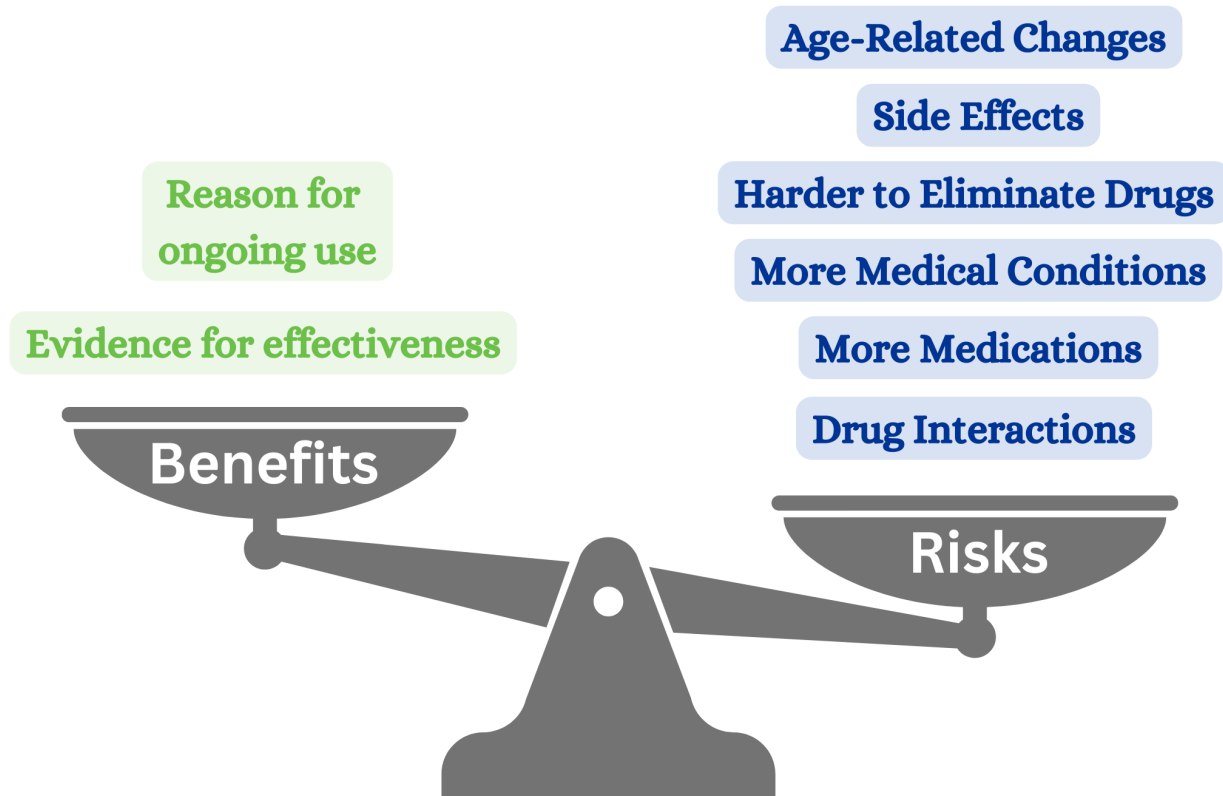


Medications are Meant to:

- Treat symptoms
- Help medical conditions from getting worse
- Reduce the risk of getting a new medical condition



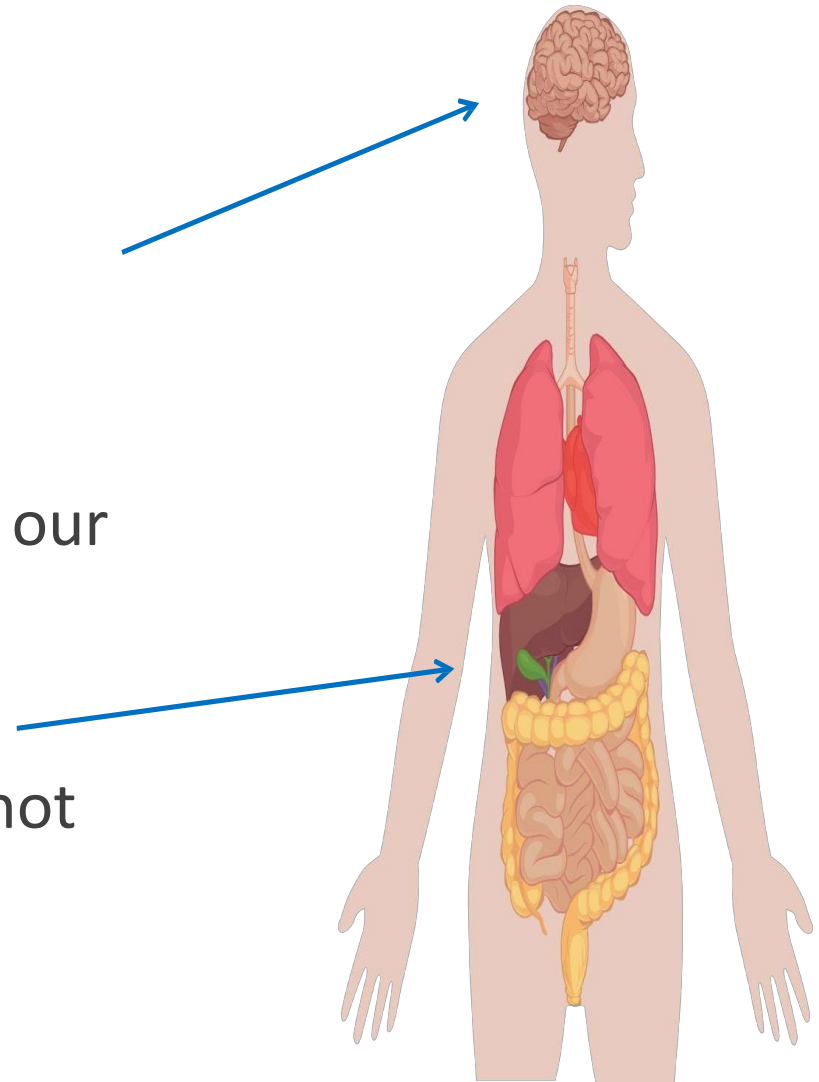
But Sometimes ...



Benefits vs. Risks of Taking Medications in the Long Term

As We Get Older ...

- The brain becomes more sensitive to drug effects
- Some medications stay in our body longer
- Our liver and kidneys do not remove medications as efficiently



Changing Goals of Care and Medications

Prolonging Life vs. Improving Quality of Life

Prolonging Life	Improve Quality of Life
Strict Blood Pressure Control	Reduce Signs of Low Blood Pressure (e.g. dizziness)
vs.	
Strict Blood Sugar Control	Reduce Risk of Falls

Disease Prevention vs. Symptom Management


Disease Prevention	Symptom Management
Prevention of Heart Disease	Pain Management

What Could Medication Changes Look Like?

- **Stopping non-essential medications**
- **Stopping medications that could impact memory or increase falls risk**
- **Managing Symptoms**
 - Pain
 - Shortness of Breath
 - Nausea/Vomiting
- **If having trouble swallowing:**
 - Other ways of receiving medications (e.g. patch, injection)
 - Crushed Medications
- **Advance-Care Planning and Goals of Care** should guide the initiation of any treatments to *prolong life*

This is What We Call Deprescribing

- Planned and supervised process
- Backing off when doses are too high or stopping medications that are no longer needed or may be causing harm
- Part of good prescribing



A Medication Review:

Where Does One Start?

Medication Reviews in LTC

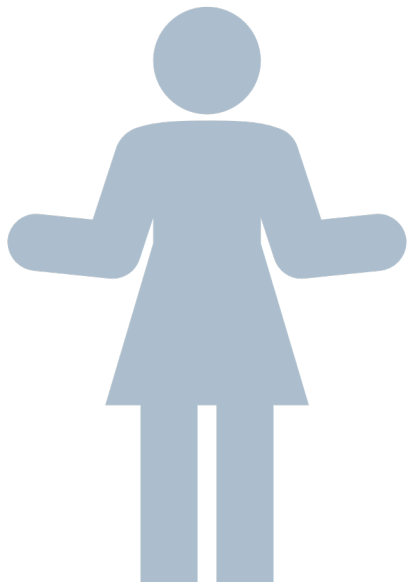


- A critical examination of all scheduled or as needed medications taken
- Goals:
 - *For the healthcare professionals and the person or substitute decision maker to **agree on**:*
 - The treatment plan – “What matters most?”;
 - That each medication has a reason for use, and is helpful, appropriate, and being used effectively;
 - Identify and resolve medication-related problems; and
 - Stopping medications that do not fit your goals

When Do Medications Get Reviewed?

- **When moving into LTC**
- **Care Conferences**
 - Within 6 months of moving in, then (at least) once every year
- **Quarterly Medication Reviews**
 - Every 3 months
- **When something changes**
 - For example, after a fall or after discharge from hospital

How Can I Be Involved?



Investigate

- Each LTC home may have a different process
- Who should I talk to first?
- When are my medication reviews planned?

Advocate

- Voice your interest in being involved and kept up to date with medication changes

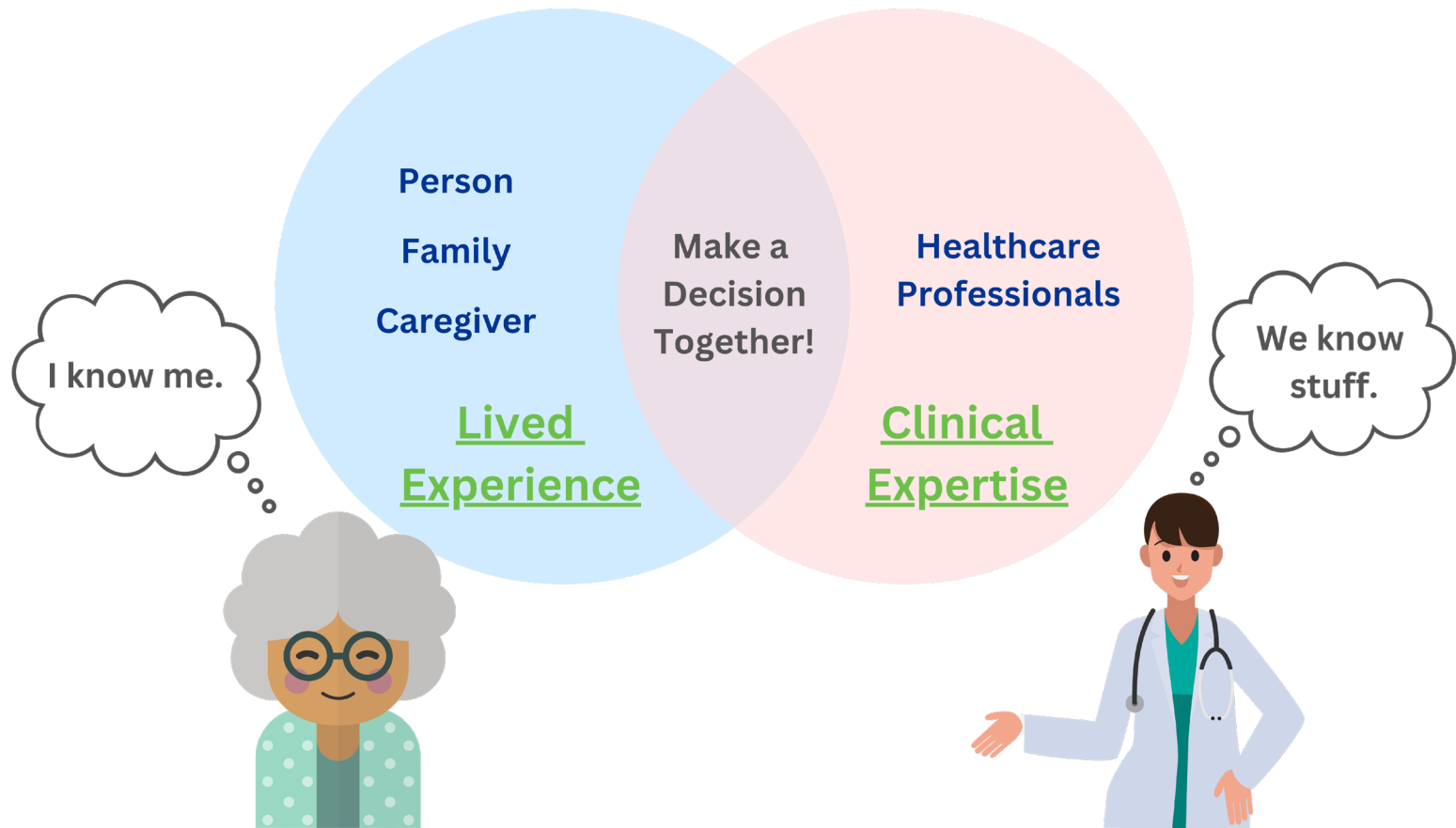
Be prepared

- Ask for the pharmacist contact information
- Ask when are the best times to talk
- Gather your thoughts

Conversations About Medications Need a Team Approach



Medication Reviews are About Sharing Expertise



You Are A Very Important Part of the Team

Role:	Can Help With:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide details about medication history• Decide “what matters most” and goals of treatment• Report new symptoms that could be a problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Answering if a medication still meets the goals• Identifying medications that could be deprescribed• Identifying side effects with starting a medication or problems related to stopping of a medication

Who Can I Talk to About My Medications?

Getting Involved in Medication Decisions in Long-Term Care (LTC): A Guide for Residents, Families, and Caregivers

Who Can I Talk To?

Nurses (RN/RPN)



Nurses assess residents, give medications, watch for medication side effects and write details into a medication administration record (MAR).

Nurses are a great first point of contact for any medication-related questions you may have. Nurses can provide a list of medications, and provide more information such as if a resident refused any doses or how often "as needed medications" are used.

Personal Support Workers (PSWs) / Care Aides



PSWs or Care Aides help residents with activities of daily living such as bathing, dressing, or toileting. PSWs may also give certain medications.

PSWs or Care Aides spend the most time with residents and can give valuable information about day-to-day changes in how residents feel, and if any changes could be due to medications.

Pharmacists (RPh)



Pharmacists assess residents' medications to see how well they are working, whether a medication may be causing side effects and check that doses are a good fit for the resident. Pharmacists also dispense medications.

Pharmacists can also provide a list of medications, and answer questions about why a medication is being used, side effects, and drug interactions.

Doctors & Nurse Practitioners (NP)



Doctors & NPs monitor and examine resident health, review the resident's care plan, and prescribe medications.

Doctors can answer questions related to a resident's care. They may not always be at the LTC home, so it may be helpful to ask the nurse or PSW about the best way to contact them.

Social Workers (RSW)



Social workers know the resident and family well. They are a great contact point for providing additional resources, and helping with issues relating to medication coverage.

Let's Dive Deeper Into Your Role as Part of the Team

What Can You Do to
Feel Prepared?



Stay Informed, Offer Details

My Medication Record

Current medications

Include all prescription and over-the-counter drugs, vitamins and supplements. Don't forget to list any eye/ear drops, patches, creams, inhalers, nasal sprays or injections.

Medication name and how I take it: (dose, when and how often, how I take it (e.g., by mouth, in the eyes or ears, on the skin etc.)	Reason(s) for use	I started this medication ... (date, months or years ago)	I was told to take this medication for...' (months, years, for the rest of my life, don't know)	Prescribed by	Additional information (e.g., changes in doses, side effects I watch for, did it help my symptoms? Do I do any monitoring at home and what are the results?)



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Important Medication Details to Know About

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.

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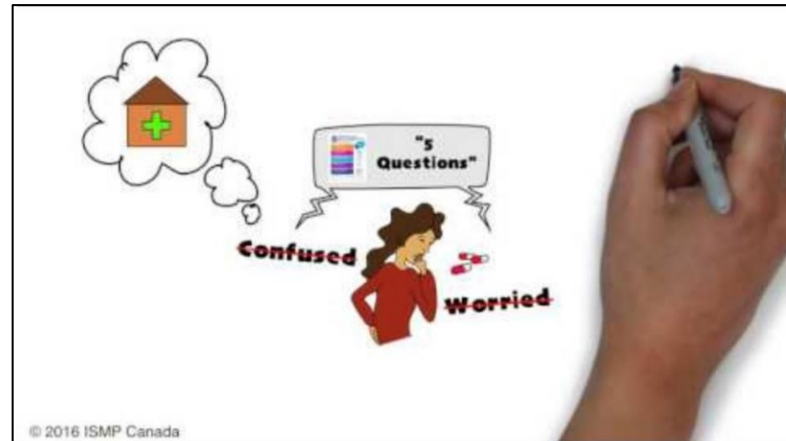
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www.safemedicationuse.ca

Getting Medication Information: Reliable Medication Resources

- Anywhere or anyone trusted to give correct and up-to-date medication information
 - Your healthcare provider (e.g., doctor, pharmacist, nurse)
 - Medline Plus www.medlineplus.gov
- General tips:
 - Is it written by or an in-person consultation with a health professional (e.g. doctor, nurse, pharmacist)?
 - Is the information current?
 - Is the information the same if you check another resource?
- **Beware: Television, radio shows and commercials**

Help Spot and Report Concerns or Changes



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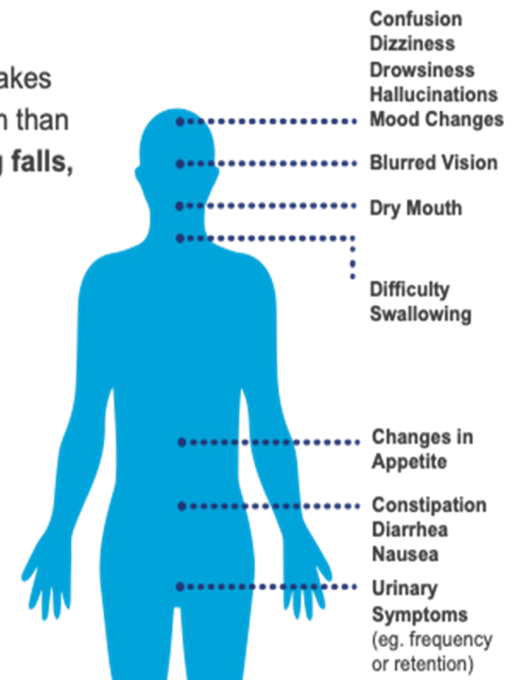
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Identifying People for Medication Assessment.

It's likely that someone you care for takes a **medication** that may do more harm than good, causing serious risks, including **falls, fractures and hospitalizations**.

**Spot the signs
and report possible
medication-related
side effects in the
people you
care for.**



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Shared Decision-Making



Understanding the options. Reaching choices that fit your values and preferences.

How Can I Participate in Shared Decision-Making?

Questions to ask the health care provider:	Questions to ask yourself:
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What are the different options available? Are there any non-drug options?2. What are the risks of each option?3. What are the benefits of each option?4. What happens if we don't change anything?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What goals are important to the resident?2. Am I ready to make a decision now or would I like more time or information?

Resources That Can Help You Prepare

5 STEPS to Participate in Shared Decision-Making About Medications.

1. **CONSIDER** that a decision about your medication may need to be made.
2. **SHARE** goals of care and preferences.
3. **ASK** about the benefits, risks and expected outcomes of each option and listen to what the healthcare provider says about reasonable expectations.
4. Feel like you **UNDERSTAND** each option, ask questions if not sure.
5. **HELP** make an informed decision about medication options and let your healthcare provider know if you change your mind.

For more information visit www.deprescribing.org/deprescribing-in-ltc-framework/

Having conversations about **your medications.**

Take part in decisions about your medications with your healthcare provider. Consider using the prompts or questions below to help you when having these important conversations.

- “It is important to me that...”
- “What are the different options available to me? Are there any non-drug options?”
- “What are the risks and benefits of each option?”
- “I would prefer...”



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Starting Conversations Can Be Hard ... But Not Impossible



Don't be afraid to take the first step.

Be clear with what you are looking for.

Help the team understand what you need.

I want to understand what medications I am taking and why. I would like you to tell me about their benefits, risks, and side effects.

It is important to me to be able to talk with my grandchildren but I feel like I am in a "fog" lately. Could any of my medications be causing this?

I want to be more involved in making decisions about my medications. I would like for you to help me understand so that I can make those choices.

Take Home Points:

1. Medications should fit with “what matters most” to you.
2. As you get older, medications can start affecting you differently.
 - It is a good idea to review them regularly, reducing medications no longer needed or are causing more harm than good.
3. Safe medication management is a team effort.
 - Decisions are a shared agreement between you and your care team.
4. Ask your care team about medication reviews and how you can be involved.
 - Tools are available to help you feel prepared.



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With Many Thanks

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