



## Safe use of medicines

By: The Canadian Virtual Hospice Team

### Consider the following

- Take only the amount of medication that has been prescribed. If you have concerns about the medication or its dosage, talk with your healthcare provider.
- Medication should never be taken by anyone other than the person for whom it was prescribed.
- Sometimes medications are prescribed on an 'as needed' basis only. Talk with your healthcare provider about scheduling your medication if you are requiring it regularly for symptoms.
- Contact your healthcare provider if you expect something is going to make you nauseated or vomit. You may be able to take anti-nausea medicine ahead of time.
- If you vomit shortly after swallowing medication, contact your healthcare provider about replacing the dose you threw up.

### Safe storage of medications including opioids

It is important to keep all medications in a safe place away from children and pets. Some people choose to have a lockbox in the home.

### Safe disposal of opioids and other medications

- Talk with your healthcare provider or pharmacist about the safe disposal of used opioid medication patches (fentanyl).
- Take unused medications including opioids, that are no longer needed, to a pharmacist for safe disposal.

### It's helpful to know that:

- Sometimes more than one medication is needed to treat a problem or symptom.
- The causes of nausea and vomiting may be different for each person. If your healthcare provider prescribed medication for your nausea, vomiting or both, your medication could likely be different from someone else's.
- If you have questions about why you've been prescribed a certain medication and you'd like to understand more, talk with your healthcare provider or your pharmacist.

To learn more, go to:

[Help with Medications](#)

[Common concerns about opioids in palliative care](#)