



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Consumer, Lifestyle, Healthcare Editors

ISMP Canada Launches the first Canadian High-Alert Medication List

The Institute for Safe Medication Practices Canada ([ISMP Canada](https://www.ismp.ca)) is launching the first-ever *Canadian High-Alert Medication List*.

High-alert medications have a higher risk of causing significant patient harm when they are involved in a medication error. These medications are not necessarily more likely to be involved in an error or incident, but when such incidents do occur, the consequences are often more severe than with other medications.

“The number of Canadian patients harmed by medications each year is unacceptable. We collaborated with our partners across Canada to identify a list of medications that are more likely to result in harm when an error occurs. Healthcare organizations can use the list to take action to reduce this risk,” said **Carolyn Hoffman, CEO of ISMP Canada**.

The list was informed by data about medication errors collected through the **Canadian Medication Incident Reporting and Prevention System (CMIRPS)**, and incorporates advice from patients and caregivers, healthcare practitioners, and patient safety experts from across Canada.

Given the range of healthcare settings, the many types of medications used, and the diversity of populations served, it is expected that each care organization will use the *Canadian High-Alert Medication List* to develop their own organization-specific list. This organization-specific list



will highlight medications requiring additional safety strategies to reduce the risk of errors and patient harm.

“We encourage organizations to look at the way they deliver services, to review their processes, and to choose to customize the list to ensure safer medication practices in their own care areas,” said **Dr. Michael Hamilton, Medical Director at ISMP Canada**. “Care providers must also ensure that strong and effective safety strategies are in place for all the medications that they designate as high-alert – for example, the use of error-reduction software in ‘smart’ intravenous pumps can greatly improve the safety of intravenous high-alert medications.”

ISMP Canada has also developed an accompanying User Guide to assist organizations in establishing, implementing, and updating their high-alert medication lists and associated safeguards.

“This is an excellent medication safety resource for the Canadian Healthcare Community, no doubt it will propel patient safety forward as we use it to guide our medication processes,” adds **Angela Butuk RN, BSN, RNFA, Medication Safety Officer, Saskatchewan Health Authority**.

Patients, caregivers, and all care partners have an important role to play in supporting safe health care. Patients and caregivers are encouraged to report errors and concerns related to medications to the mederror.ca reporting system. Healthcare providers should report medication issues through their organizational reporting systems and can also submit a report to ISMP Canada through <https://ismpcanada.ca/report/>.

We can all work together to make medication use safer.



ISMP Canada Safety Bulletin: [ISMPCSB2024-i1-High-Alert-Medications \(ismpcanada.ca\)](https://ismpcanada.ca/ismpcsb2024-i1-high-alert-medications)

ISMP Canada High-Alert Medication Web Page: <https://ismpcanada.ca/resource/highalertlist/>

About ISMP Canada

The Institute for Safe Medication Practices Canada is a national, independent, and not-for-profit organization that purposefully partners with organizations, practitioners, consumers, and caregivers to advance medication safety in all healthcare settings.

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About CMIRPS

The Canadian Medication Incident Reporting and Prevention System (CMIRPS) is a collaborative pan-Canadian program of Health Canada, the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI), the Institute for Safe Medication Practices Canada (ISMP Canada), Healthcare Excellence Canada (HEC) and Patients for Patient Safety Canada (PFPS). The goal of CMIRPS is to reduce and prevent harmful medication incidents (also known as errors) in Canada.

For more information and to arrange for interviews, contact:

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