



National Incident Data Repository Safety Brief

Nova Scotia Data

from community pharmacies

Reporting period: April 1, 2025 – September 30, 2025

7,464 reports received

Stages of the medication-use process in which incidents were reported to occur

Prescription order entry	5,072
Prescription preparation/dispensing	3,594
Prescribing	377
Administration	156
Monitoring/follow-up	73

"Not applicable" was reported in 137 incidents

Types of incidents (including near misses (Top 5))

Incorrect dose/frequency	1,786
Incorrect quantity	1,374
Incorrect drug	810
Incorrect prescriber	678
Incorrect strength/concentration	642

Reported levels of harm

Near miss (e.g., no error)	5,196
No harm	2,136
Mild harm	116
Moderate harm	15
Severe harm	0
Death	1

National Learning

Nova Scotia community pharmacies contribute to national learning and improvement initiatives to advance patient safety. Reporting of medication incidents, including near misses, reflects a growing culture of safety in Canada.

A selected focus for this safety brief is incidents where "**patient education problem**" was a potential contributing factor. In Nova Scotia, within this subset of reports (n=50), 8% reported **mild harm or death**.



The following tips can help optimize patient engagement at prescription order entry (for information gathering) and at prescription pickup (for information sharing):

SAFETY TIPS:

- Follow the **General Pharmacy Practice standards** for a pharmacist to counsel a patient for new *or changed* prescriptions and as needed for ongoing monitoring. Use a patient-centred approach, including a designated private space and the use of open-ended questions.
- At pickup, show the patient/caregiver the prescription vial contents and label to confirm their understanding of the medication and as a final check for accuracy. Describe in detail how to use the medication.
- Incorporate a pharmacist at prescription intake to facilitate clinical verification, including an earlier double check with the patient (e.g., to confirm the medication, dose, indication, and directions for use).

A key component of ISMP Canada data analysis is a review of the incident descriptions. The efforts by reporters to provide information that helps identify emerging issues and shared learning opportunities are gratefully acknowledged.

Additional safety recommendations can be found in ISMP Canada Safety Bulletins: <https://ismpcanada.ca/safety-bulletins/>

REPORT ✓ **LEARN** ✓ **ACT** ✓

More than 283,700 reports of medication incidents have been submitted to the National Incident Data Repository for Community Pharmacies (NIDR) from Nova Scotia since 2010.

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