



Stafford Pharmacy & Home Healthcare

The Mortar & Pestle

Volume 5, Issue 8 (August 2014)

DRUGS AND SUN SENSITIVITY

Summer has finally arrived, and that means we will hopefully all be enjoying basking in the sunlight! While we do so, it is important that we protect ourselves from the sun to prevent skin cancer but there may be one more reason – your medications may interact with the sun.

How do drugs interact with the sun?

When you take a medication, it is distributed throughout your body. The medications also end up in your skin where it is able to interact with the sun. In **phototoxic** reactions, the drug absorbs the UVA energy and releases it into the skin causing damage. This results in a severe sun burn type of skin damage. In a **photoallergic** reaction, the sun alters the drug within the skin which leads to an allergic type reaction. In both cases the result is a painful and in some cases very serious skin reaction.

Which Drugs are most likely to cause sun sensitivity reactions?

Not all medications interact with the sun. This is a short list of the most commonly used medications that can cause sun sensitivity. If you would like to know if any of the medications you take can interact with the sun, speak with one of our pharmacists today.

- Antibiotics: ciprofloxacin, tetracycline, doxycycline, sulfamethoxazole
- Anti-malarial drugs: quinine etc.
- Heart Medications: amiodarone, nifedipine, diltiazem
- Blood Pressure medications: hydrochlorothiazide, furosemide
- Diabetic medications: glyburide, gliclazide
- Acne medications: Isotretinoin, acitretin
- Anti-depressants: amitriptyline
- Anti-inflammatories: ibuprofen, naproxen
- And quite a few more!



How can you prevent these reactions?

If you are taking a medication which is likely to react with the sun, you should minimize sun exposure. A broad spectrum sunscreen protects against both UVA and UVB helping to prevent a photoreaction. Remember to apply sunscreen 30 minutes before you go out in the sun and reapply every 2 hours. Physical measures include wearing a hat, sunglasses and protective clothing as well as seeking shade when possible.

For more information about your medication and staying sun safe, speak with a member of our pharmacy team today!



STAY SAFE AT YOUR SUMMER BBQ

For many, summer means BBQ's and picnics - delish! While the heat is on the rise, food borne illnesses (aka food poisonings) are too. Bacteria multiply much faster in the summer heat, so food safety is even more important in the summer months.

Be sure to stay safe this summer with these simple tips:

- Wash your hands before preparing food.
- Keep raw food separate from cooked food and be sure to use different plates, utensils and cutting boards for raw and cooked food.
- Marinate meat in the fridge, not on the counter.
- Cook food thoroughly.
- Refrigerate and freeze food promptly. Never leave food out for more than an hour when the temperature is above 30°C.
- Keep hot food hot and cold food cold.



Even if you follow these simple tips, it is still possible to become sick from food contaminated with bacteria. In most cases food poisoning symptoms will resolve without the need for medical intervention. However, if you develop a **high fever**, have **severe diarrhea**, **blood in your stool** or signs of **dehydration** seek medical attention.

OUT OF REFILLS? DOCTOR ON HOLIDAYS?

Did you just realize you are down to your last few pills and can't get in to see your doctor? Your pharmacist may be able to help you.

In Alberta, pharmacists are able to assess patients and renew prescriptions for a limited quantity of time if they deem necessary. This clinical service provided by pharmacies is **not intended to replace your doctor**, and is available for those circumstances when your doctor cannot see you. Be aware that there are certain medications which a pharmacist cannot renew including narcotics and controlled medications.

What will be required in order to have a pharmacist renew your prescription?

- The pharmacist must be able to see you in person
- The pharmacist must be comfortable assessing your condition
- The pharmacist must determine there is still a need for the prescription
- The pharmacist will ask you questions about your medication and the condition it is being used for and may review recent lab work and/or ask to check your blood pressure
- You will be asked to sign a consent form authorizing the pharmacist to renew the medication for you

The clinical service of renewing prescriptions is not intended to be a replacement for a physician visit. After an assessment the pharmacist must use their clinical judgement in order to determine if renewing the prescription is in the patient's best interest. Medication being used to manage a particular health issue such as high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease or the many other conditions requiring a daily medication regimen, will likely see the pharmacist want to continue the medication but keep in mind that the pharmacist is under no obligation to renew a prescription. It is always a professional and clinical judgement call.

If you are out of refills and you are unable to see your doctor before you will run out of medication, speak with a member of our pharmacy team today. Our pharmacists will do their best to help you continue necessary drug therapy.

Volume 5, Issue 8

Content/Writer: Jaclyn Katelnikoff, Clinical Pharmacist

Editor: Igor Shaskin, Clinical Pharmacist

Reviewer: Pete Christensen, Clinical Pharmacist

