

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PROPER STORAGE AND DISPOSAL OF MEDICATION

1. Do you keep your medication in an appropriate place?

Medication must be kept in a place that meets the following conditions:

- Away from humidity
- Away from direct light
- Kept from freezing or being exposed to excessive heat
- Out of the reach of children

Bathrooms, which are too humid, are not the ideal place to keep medication. Neither is the glove compartment, which is exposed to temperature extremes, nor the windowsill, which may be in the direct sun!

Even if you don't live with small children, you must not forget those occasional visitors with agile fingers... even grandparents must make sure to childproof their medication!

2. Refrigerate only the medication that needs to be kept cold. Read the labels to see if your medication has any specific storage conditions.

3. Store all of your family's medicine in the same place, to reduce the risk of accidents.

4. Cleaning out your medicine cabinet should be part of your routine. Do it twice a year or, at the very least, once a year.

5. Keep all medication in its child-resistant containers. If you find these containers too difficult to open, speak to your pharmacist, who will provide you with containers that are better adapted to your needs.

6. Dispose of prescription and over-the-counter drugs that have expired or that you no longer use. Don't forget to check the fridge or any other place where you may keep these products.

Some drugs must be disposed of within weeks of their first use. The date appearing on the manufacturer's label can therefore be confusing. The pharmacist's label on prescription medication always indicates the precise date upon which you must dispose of the product.

7. Dispose of medication that is no longer in its original container or that has an illegible label.

8. Dispose of any medication that has changed colour, shape, consistency or smell.

9. Never keep more than one medication in the same container.

10. Do not discard your out-of date or unused medication in the garbage or toilet. Take it back to your pharmacist, so it can be disposed of safely.

GENERAL RULE: WHEN IN DOUBT AS TO THE CONSERVATION OR QUALITY OF MEDICATION, CONSULT YOUR PHARMACIST.

References

- Ordre des pharmaciens du Québec, norme 89.01. *La détermination de la date de péremption réelle des médicaments servis/vendus en exécution ou non d'une ordonnance, annexe I.*
- Canadian Pharmacists Association. *Your Medicine Cabinet*, 1998.
- Health Canada. *Proper Use and Disposal of Medication*, January 2004.
- National Council on Patient Information and Education, United States. *Tips on Safe Storage and Disposal of your Prescription Medicines*, 2003.
- American Society of Health-System Pharmacists. *SafeMedication.com*.