

THE NATIONAL PHARMACOVIGILANCE PROGRAM NEWSLETTER LEBANON ISSUE 18 - April 2026



**Medication Safety in Times of Crisis
Ensuring Safe Use of Medicines for Patients, Families, and
Communities in Lebanon**

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I. EDITORIAL NOTE

LNPVP Team Message to Our Community



In light of the current challenging situation in Lebanon, marked by instability, displacement, and heightened stress, ensuring the safe use of medications is more important than ever.

During crises, access to healthcare services may be disrupted, treatments may be interrupted, and individuals may resort to using available or shared medications without proper guidance. These factors increase the risk of adverse drug reactions, medication errors, and ineffective treatment.

The Lebanese National Pharmacovigilance Program (LNPVP) remains committed to protecting public health by promoting the safe and responsible use of medicines. This special edition is dedicated to patients, families, and community organizations, offering practical guidance to help prevent harm and maintain continuity of care.

Medication safety is a shared responsibility. Staying informed and vigilant can make a critical difference.

II. PATIENT GUIDE TO MEDICATION SAFETY IN THE TIMES OF CRISIS



To ensure safe medication use during emergencies

- Take medications exactly as prescribed.
- Do not share medications with others.
- Avoid starting new medications without medical advice.
- Maintain an updated list of all medications, including doses and schedules.
- Seek medical advice before restarting or modifying treatment after interruption.



Missed Dose Guidance

- Take the missed dose as soon as possible unless it is close to the next scheduled dose.
- Do not double the dose unless advised by a healthcare professional.



Safe Storage

- Store medications in a cool, dry place away from sunlight.
- Keep medications in their original labeled packaging.
- Avoid exposure to heat (e.g., cars or direct sun).
- Keep out of reach of children.

III. FAMILY GUIDE TO MEDICATION SAFETY IN THE TIMES OF CRISIS



Families are essential partners in ensuring the safe use of medications, especially during times of crisis when access to healthcare may be disrupted and risks are increased. Simple, informed actions at home can prevent harm and support continuity of care.



1. Practical Medication Safety Tips



Maintain an updated list of medications for each family member, including names, doses, and schedules.



When possible, use one pharmacy to help avoid duplication, interactions, or confusion.



Avoid combining herbal and conventional medicines unless advised by a healthcare professional.

III. FAMILY GUIDE TO MEDICATION SAFETY IN THE TIMES OF CRISIS



2.Special Considerations for Vulnerable Groups



Children

Always use proper dosing tools and prescribed doses; never estimate or use adult doses.



Pregnant Women

Avoid taking any medication unless it is specifically prescribed.



Elderly

Monitor closely for symptoms such as dizziness, confusion, or unusual behavior, as they may indicate side effects or interactions.



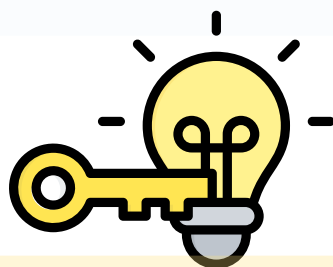
3.High-Risk Situations in Times of Crisis

During emergencies, certain situations can significantly increase the risk of medication-related harm.

Families should remain particularly vigilant in the following scenarios:

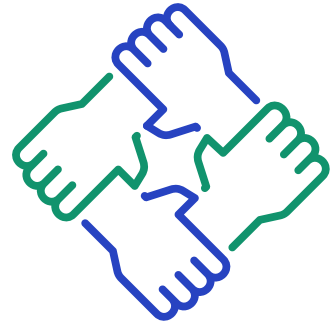
III. FAMILY GUIDE TO MEDICATION SAFETY IN THE TIMES OF CRISIS

- Interrupted Treatments:** Stopping medications for chronic conditions (such as hypertension or diabetes) can lead to serious health complications. Always seek advice before discontinuing treatment.
- Antibiotic Misuse:** Taking antibiotics without a prescription or stopping them too early can result in treatment failure and contribute to antibiotic resistance.
- Use of Unknown or Donated Medicines:** Medicines that are unlabeled, expired, or from unknown sources may be unsafe and should not be used.
- Pediatric Dosing Errors:** Children require precise dosing based on age and weight; incorrect dosing can lead to serious harm.
- Polypharmacy in the Elderly:** Taking multiple medications increases the risk of drug interactions and side effects; careful monitoring is essential.



In times of crisis, **safe medication use starts at home**. Staying informed, organized, and cautious can protect your family and prevent avoidable harm.

IV. COMMUNITY WORKERS GUIDE TO MEDICATION SAFETY IN THE TIMES OF CRISIS



Community organizations play an essential role in supporting safe medication use, especially during times of crisis. Their actions can significantly reduce the risk of harm and ensure that patients receive safe and appropriate treatment.

1. Safe Distribution of Medications

To ensure medicines are safe for use:



Verify that all medications are clearly labelled (name, strength, dose, and expiry date).



Do not distribute unidentified, expired, or poorly labelled medicines.



Avoid repackaging medications unless all original labelling information is preserved and accurate.



Ensure medicines are stored under appropriate conditions before distribution.

IV. COMMUNITY WORKERS GUIDE TO MEDICATION SAFETY IN THE TIMES OF CRISIS

2. Monitoring and Patient Support

Community workers are often the first point of contact for patients:



Encourage individuals to report any unusual symptoms after taking medications



Stay alert to signs of:

- Adverse drug reactions (e.g., rash, dizziness, severe fatigue)
- Medication errors (wrong dose, wrong medicine, incorrect use)



Provide reassurance and guide patients on when to seek medical advice.

3. Referral to Healthcare Professionals

Immediate referral is essential when:



Symptoms worsen or do not improve



Serious adverse reactions occur



There is uncertainty about medication use, dosing, or indication



Community workers should never attempt to manage complex medical situations independently.

IV. COMMUNITY WORKERS GUIDE TO MEDICATION SAFETY IN THE TIMES OF CRISIS

4. When and How to Report Side Effects

What is an Adverse Event?

An adverse event is any unwanted or harmful effect experienced after using a medication or vaccine.

Why Reporting Matters

Reporting contributes to:

- Detection of new or rare safety issues
- Improved medication safety at the national level
- Evidence-based public health decision-making

How to Report

- Through the LNPVP reporting tools (VigiMobile or Med Safety App)
- Direct Contact with the LNPVP email

What to Report

- Unexpected or unusual reactions
- Serious side effects (e.g., hospitalization, life-threatening events)
- Medication errors or misuse

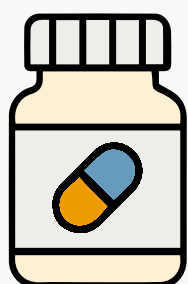


Even incomplete information is valuable; **every report counts.**

IV. COMMUNITY WORKERS GUIDE TO MEDICATION SAFETY IN THE TIMES OF CRISIS

5. Identifying Counterfeit or Substandard Medications

In crisis settings, falsified or poor-quality medicines may circulate. Community workers should carefully check:



Packaging

- Poor-quality printing or spelling errors
- Damaged, tampered, or unusual packaging



Labelling

- Missing or unclear medicine name, batch number, or expiry date
- Absence of manufacturer details



Source

- Medicines obtained from unverified or informal suppliers
- Donations without proper documentation

IV. COMMUNITY WORKERS GUIDE TO MEDICATION SAFETY IN THE TIMES OF CRISIS

5. Identifying Counterfeit or Substandard Medications

In crisis settings, falsified or poor-quality medicines may circulate. Community workers should carefully check:



Physical Appearance

- Changes in colour, shape, size, or smell
- Tablets that are broken, powdery, or inconsistent



Additional Warning Signs

- Missing patient leaflet
- Inconsistent packaging compared to known products



Action to Take

- Report immediately to the LNPVP or relevant health authorities

Patient safety must always come first.

Community workers are essential partners in protecting public health—your vigilance and actions can prevent harm and save lives.

V. MYTHS VS. FACTS

MYTH

If a medicine helped someone, it is safe for me



FACT

Medications are individualized and may not be safe for others

Doubling the dose compensates for a missed dose



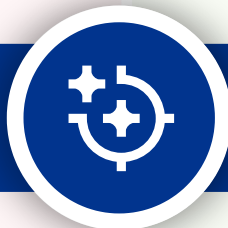
This can lead to overdose and serious harm

Antibiotics treat all infections



Antibiotics are only effective against bacterial infections

Natural or herbal products are always safe



They may cause side effects and interact with medications

VI. LNPVP IN ACTION

 Despite ongoing challenges, the LNPVP continues to:

Monitor medication safety nationwide



Analyze adverse event reports

Collaborate with healthcare providers and public health programs



Promote awareness among patients and communities

Important Contacts and Resources

For inquiries:

LNPVP – Ministry of Public Health



pv@moph.gov.lb or pv.moph@gmail.com

For Reporting:

Reporting Platforms

VigiMobile e-Forms



VACCINES



MEDICATIONS

MedSafety App



Med Safety

PV Team Members at The MoPH

Dr. Rita Karam

Dr. Abeer Zeitoun

Dr. Aya Ibrahim

Be a Medication Safety Hero - In times of crisis, safe medication use saves lives.

Stay Vigilant
Stay Safe
Report



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ابقَ آمِنًا
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