MedEffect Web site

WWW.MEDEFFECT.CA

Health Canada has created a new Web site to make it easier for physicians to obtain information about adverse drug reactions and to report such events in their own practice. This article reviews the features of this Web site that are most relevant to rural physicians.

Navigation

MedEffect is part of the main Health Canada Web site. The menus at the top and left-hand side of the page are part of that Web site, rather than MedEffect itself. Most of the information about adverse reactions is found in the “Topics” or “Quick Links” sections on the right-hand side of each MedEffect page. A search engine is available, but it searches the entire Health Canada Web site, not just MedEffect.

The home page provides links to the following topics on the right-hand side of the page.

About MedEffect

This section contains background information about the MedEffect program. The “Quick Links” section contains useful links to “View Advisories, Warnings, and Recalls” and “Report a Problem or Reaction.”

Adverse Reaction Database

This link takes you to a page that eventually allows you to search for all reported reactions to a particular product. The most relevant link is at the bottom of the page. It starts with the words “Please read this document.” To reach the database itself, you must click the “I have read and understood” link at the bottom of the next page.

Adverse Reaction Information

This section contains background information about adverse drug reactions.

Adverse Reaction Reporting

The “Topics” menu contains a link to a list of the regional adverse reaction reporting centres. It also contains a link to the adverse reaction reporting form (ar-ei_form_e.pdf) in PDF format. The “Guidance Documents” link provides background information about reporting adverse reactions.

Advisories, Warnings, Recalls

The “Topics” menu has separate sections for health professionals and patients. Information is listed by year and month. Warnings about “natural products” only seem to appear in the patient section.

Canadian Adverse Reaction Newsletter

The Canadian Adverse Reaction Newsletter is published quarterly. It alerts health professionals to issues arising from case reports submitted to Health Canada.

Consultations

This section contains further background information about the MedEffect program.

FAQs

Here you will find answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the program. A link to this section also appears on the main MedEffect page.

MedEffect e-Notice Sign-up

This link allows you to register to receive the Canadian Adverse Reaction Newsletter.
Newsletter and other adverse reactions information in electronic format.

**Reports & Research**
This link displays reports and research about adverse drug reactions. At the time of writing, the latest report was 2 years old.

**Resource Centre**
The Resource Centre offers links to other relevant Web resources, which may be useful for those seeking additional information on health product safety.

**Updates**
This is a direct link to information that has been listed in the past 30 days. After that, the information is moved to the “Advisories, Warnings, Recalls” section.

**Bottom Line**
This Web site contains useful information about adverse drug reactions, but its confusing organization and lack of a site-specific search engine limit its usefulness for busy rural physicians.

**Competing interests:** None declared.