

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Almost 40% of Canadians are not taking their medications properly: poll

Medication reviews and pharmacist consultations critically important, especially for those taking multiple medications

March 18, 2019– Richmond, BC – Nearly forty per cent (39%) of Canadians are not taking their prescription medications properly according to a new survey conducted by Insights West on behalf of London Drugs. This includes one in four (25%) who admit they take less than prescribed or don't fill prescriptions given to them, one in five (21%) who say they stop taking medications before advised, and 19% who admit they make adjustments to prescription dosage, size, or frequency without consulting a healthcare professional.

"The significant number of Canadians who reportedly do not take their medications accurately is not limited to any particular age or gender demographic—it is rampant across the board, suggesting that awareness and education among all Canadians needs to be improved," says Steve Mossop, President of Insights West.

"Either intentional or unwitting failure to take medications as prescribed decreases the effectiveness of treatment and endangers patient health," says Michael Athanassakis, a Pharmacist at London Drugs. "There are several factors that contribute to the improper use of medications, including forgetfulness, inconvenience, and a lack of understanding about how to take medications properly."

According to the poll, close to a quarter (23%) of Canadians attribute their nonadherence to forgetfulness, saying they have had trouble remembering when or if they have taken a medication. One in ten (9%) say they feel overwhelmed by the complexity of their medication regimen, and a further eight percent say they are unsure why they have been prescribed certain medications.

"It's not uncommon for some patients – especially those who have chronic health conditions – to be prescribed multiple medications at a time. These drugs can interact with each other in unpleasant or even dangerous ways which makes it imperative that patients understand how to take them properly," says Athanassakis.

Pharmacists are trained to help patients ensure the safe and effective use of prescriptions and identify a wide range of medication issues. While awareness about their expertise in this area is high, the poll revealed that Canadians aren't getting — or asking for — as much help as they could be from pharmacists. For example, the vast majority (87%) of Canadians are aware that pharmacists offer counselling on the safe use of medications, but only about one in three (36%) say they use this service. Eight in ten (86%) say they are aware pharmacists can review current prescription medications to help minimize drug interactions and ensure maximum effectiveness, yet only four in ten (40%) say they have consulted a pharmacist on this topic. Just under half (47%) report asking pharmacists for advice for managing side effects and drug interactions.

"Medication reviews and pharmacist consultations are safeguards designed to make sure people take medications correctly. They also help patients understand the purpose and potential downsides of all meds to help them avoid serious drug side-effects, drug interactions, and even overdoses," says Athanassakis. "Sometimes we determine that a patient's medications may not



be working together ideally, or they might even be working against each other slightly, or they could be redundant. Each person experiences different interactions and side-effects, which makes an individualized consultation even more important.”

The vast majority (88%) of Canadians agree that it is important to follow prescription instructions exactly, including 64 percent who strongly agree.

For more information about Medication Reviews at London Drugs or to book an appointment visit: <https://pharmacy.londondrugs.com/PharmacyServices/Medication-Review>

ABOUT THE SURVEY

Results are based on an online study conducted from February 13th to 28th, 2019, among a representative sample of 351 Saskatchewan adults, who are members of the Angus Reid Forum. The data has been statistically weighted according to Canadian census figures for age, gender and region. The margin of error—which measures sample variability—is +/- 5.20 percentage points. Discrepancies between totals are due to rounding. Click here to view the detailed data tabulations.

ABOUT LONDON DRUGS

Founded in 1945, B.C.-based London Drugs has 81 stores in more than 35 major markets throughout British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba including its online store www.LondonDrugs.com. London Drugs offers consumers a range of products from digital cameras and cosmetics to computers and televisions. Renowned for its creative approach to retailing, the company employs more than 7,500 people with pharmacy and health care services being the heart of its business. Committed to innovation and superior customer service, London Drugs has established itself as a reputable and caring company and continues to position itself for future growth and development.

ABOUT INSIGHTS WEST

Insights West is a progressive, Western-based, full-service marketing research company. It exists to serve the market with insights-driven research solutions and interpretive analysis through leading-edge tools, normative databases, and senior-level expertise across a broad range of public and private sector organizations. Insights West is based in Vancouver and Calgary.

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