Health Canada Santé Canada

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Canadian Adverse Reaction Newsletter

Volume 23 • Issue 4 • October 2013

www.health.gc.ca/carn

In this issue

Scope

This quarterly publication alerts health professionals to potential signals detected through the review of case reports submitted to Health Canada. It is a useful mechanism to stimulate adverse reaction reporting as well as to disseminate information on suspected adverse reactions to health products occurring in humans before comprehensive risk–benefit evaluations and regulatory decisions are undertaken. The continuous evaluation of health product safety profiles depends on the quality of your reports.

Reporting Adverse Reactions

Canada Vigilance Program
Phone: 866 234-2345
Fax: 866 678-6789
Online: www.health.gc.ca/medeffect

Did you know?

To receive the **Newsletter** and health product **advisories** free by email, subscribe to the **MedEffect™ e-Notice** at **www.health.gc.ca/medeffect**

Adverse reaction reports make a difference

Key points

- Reporting of suspected adverse reactions is a key component in monitoring the safety and effectiveness of marketed health products.
- Detailed reports facilitate a more thorough assessment of the potential safety issue.
- The relationship between information collected by Health Canada and information communicated to health professionals is synergistic, as illustrated in two examples that describe how a safety issue evolved over time.

Every time you report an adverse reaction to Health Canada, you help improve the safety of health products used by Canadians.

Adverse reactions to prescription and nonprescription drugs, biologics (including fractionated blood products, as well as therapeutic and diagnostic vaccines), natural health products and radiopharmaceuticals can be reported to Health Canada (see Table 1).

Medical device-related adverse incidents and adverse events from a vaccine used in the prevention of infectious disease are reported separately (please see section on *How do you report?* for more information).

Why should you report?

Reporting of suspected adverse reactions by health professionals and consumers is a key component in monitoring the safety and effectiveness of marketed health products. These reports provide important information concerning previously undetected adverse reactions or changes in marketed health product safety and effectiveness profiles. It is well known that the controlled conditions under which patients use health products in clinical trials do not always reflect the way products will be used in real-world conditions. In addition, some adverse reactions may take a long time to develop or may occur infrequently. Even if an adverse reaction is known, additional reports are important to assess the overall benefit-risk profile of a health product.

Do not assume that someone else will report. If you are aware of an adverse reaction, report it. Duplicate reports of the same case are matched in the Health Canada database and may provide a clearer picture of the adverse reaction.

What should you report?

You do not have to be certain that a health product caused the reaction in order to report it. Adverse reaction reports are, for the most part, only *suspected associations*. Health Canada wants to know about *all* suspected adverse reactions, but especially if they are:

- unexpected (not consistent with product information or labelling), regardless of their severity;
- serious*, whether expected or not; or
- related to a new health product (one that has been on the market less than 5 years).

Adverse reaction reports require at least four information items in order to be properly assessed by Health Canada. It only takes a few moments to provide the following:

1. **patient identifier** such as a qualifying descriptor (e.g., sex, age, etc.) or a patient identification number; for reasons of confidentiality, do not use name or initials
2. **description of the adverse reaction** experienced by the patient
3. **name of the health product**† you suspect caused the adverse reaction
4. **your contact information** in case Health Canada requires additional information

Please do not hesitate to report *any suspected adverse reaction of clinical concern,* even if you are unable to supply any further details.

Quality reporting is key!

Providing as much information as possible will enhance the quality of your adverse reaction report. This includes indicating if a section is not applicable (for example, other health products taken), rather than leaving it blank. Detailed reports will facilitate a more thorough assessment of the potential safety issue. Other useful information to provide, if known, includes:

- patient characteristics (age, sex, height and weight);
- dosing information and indication for use of the suspected health product;
- therapy dates: when the suspected health product was started and stopped;
- changes to therapy with the suspected health product and impact on the patient (e.g., dechallenge/rechallenge information);
- treatment of the adverse reaction (including date the adverse reaction occurred and was resolved, if applicable);
- investigations to exclude alternate causes for the adverse reaction;
- relevant history and pre-existing conditions;
- relevant tests/lab data; and
- other health products taken (including over-the-counter and natural health products) with therapy dates and dosing information.

Please note that information related to the identities of both the patient and the reporter of an adverse reaction are protected as personal information under the *Privacy Act,* and also under the *Access to Information Act* in the case of an access to information request.

How do you report?

For information on how to report adverse reactions to prescription and nonprescription drugs, biologics (including fractionated blood products, as well as therapeutic and diagnostic vaccines), natural health products and radiopharmaceuticals, see Table 1.

For device-related adverse incidents, information on how to complete a report and where to send completed reports is available on Health Canada's web site. Please see the User Problem Reporting for Medical Devices guidance document for more information (www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/compli-conform/prob-report-rapport/gui-0060_prob-rpt_doc-eng.php).

* A serious adverse reaction is one which requires or extends a hospital stay, causes a birth defect, results in persistent or significant disability or incapacity, is life-threatening or results in death. Adverse reactions that require significant medical intervention to prevent one of these outcomes are also considered to be serious.

† It is important to include as many health product identifiers as possible in the adverse reaction reporting form, especially when reporting adverse reactions suspected of being associated with natural health products. Examples of natural health product identifiers include the exact product brand name (including modifying prefix or suffix), the Natural Product Number (NPN) or Homeopathic Medicine Number (DIN-HM), a list of ingredients (or a copy or picture of the label or container) and their amount per serving, the lot number, expiration date, company name and where the product was purchased (e.g., Internet, pharmacy, etc.).

Table 1: Reporting an adverse reaction to Health Canada	
Online	www.health.gc.ca/medeffect
By phone	1-866-234-2345 (toll-free)
By completing a form	The Canada Vigilance Adverse Reaction Reporting Form is available on the Health Canada web site (www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/medeff/report-declaration/ar-ei_form-eng.php). It is also available in the *Compendium of Pharmaceuticals and Specialties (CPS).*
	Fax completed form to 1-866-678-6789 (toll-free); or **Mail completed form** using a postage paid label (available at www.health.gc.ca/medeffect or by calling the toll-free phone number above)

To report adverse events following immunization with a vaccine used in the prevention of infectious disease, please visit the Public Health Agency of Canada's web site (www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/im/vs-sv/index-eng.php).

What happens to your reports?

Adverse reaction reports are carefully assessed along with information collected from a variety of sources (including manufacturers, scientific literature, Phase IV studies, the World Health Organization, the Public Health Agency of Canada, foreign regulatory agencies, etc.) to detect potential health product safety signals. A signal is considered to be the preliminary indication of a product-related issue. Signals are carefully evaluated to confirm or disprove the potential association between a health product and an adverse reaction.

When you report an adverse reaction, you contribute to the ongoing collection of safety information that occurs once health products are on the market. Your report may contribute to:

- the identification of previously unrecognized rare, or serious adverse reactions;
- changes in product safety information (e.g. through an update to the Canadian product monograph);
- other regulatory actions such as the issuance of a health product advisory or the withdrawal of a product from the Canadian market;
- international data regarding benefits and risks of health products; and
- increasing the safe use of health products by all Canadians.

How is new safety information communicated back to you?

New safety information may be communicated by Health Canada and/or manufacturers to health professionals and the public via:

- health product advisories (recently issued health professional and consumer advisories can be found at the end of this publication);
- Canadian product monograph updates; and
- the *Canadian Adverse Reaction Newsletter (CARN).*

The following two examples (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2) show the relationship between information collected by Health Canada (including adverse reaction reports, published literature and other types of health product safety information) and information provided to health professionals (through advisories, product monograph updates and *CARN*).

The review of marketed health products is an ongoing process. All data are assessed over time to detect potential safety signals; thus, continued adverse reaction reporting can provide valuable information that supports the monitoring of marketed health products.

Erratum:

On page 5 of the French July 2013 *CARN,* Volume 23, Issue 3, under the section "Incidents liés à des instruments médicaux", please note the following error:

"Selon les articles 59 à 61 du Règlement sur les instruments médicaux, les fabricants et les importateurs ont l'obligation de transmettre un rapport concernant tout incident lié à un instrument médical"

should be corrected to:

"Selon les articles 59 à 61 du Règlement sur les instruments médicaux, les fabricants et les importateurs ont l'obligation de transmettre les rapports d'incidents obligatoires".

Adverse reactions (ARs) to health products are considered to be suspicions, as a definite causal association often cannot be determined.
Spontaneous reports of ARs cannot be used to estimate the incidence of ARs because ARs remain underreported and patient exposure is unknown.

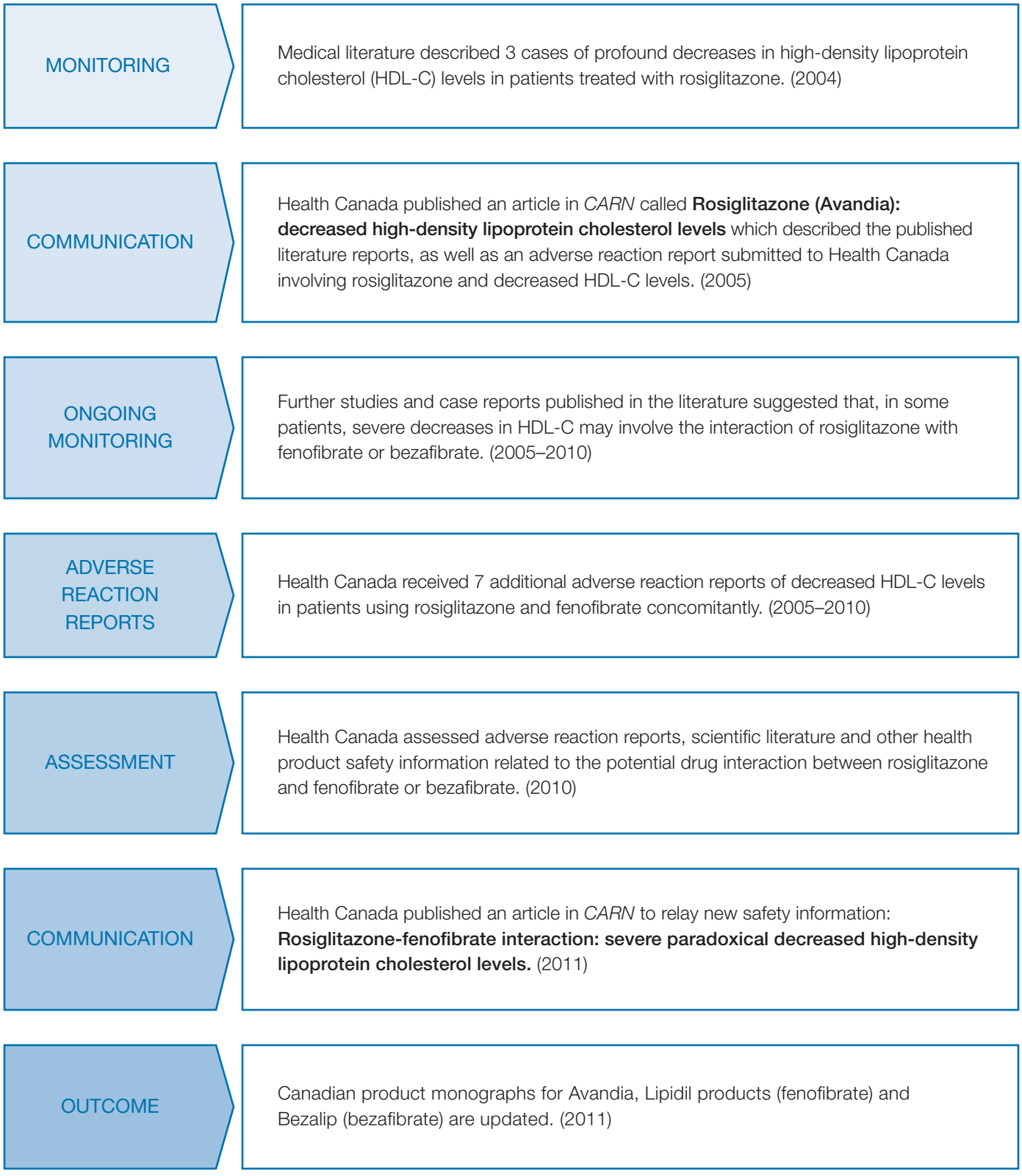

Fig. 1: Example of how a safety issue involving a pharmaceutical product evolved over time

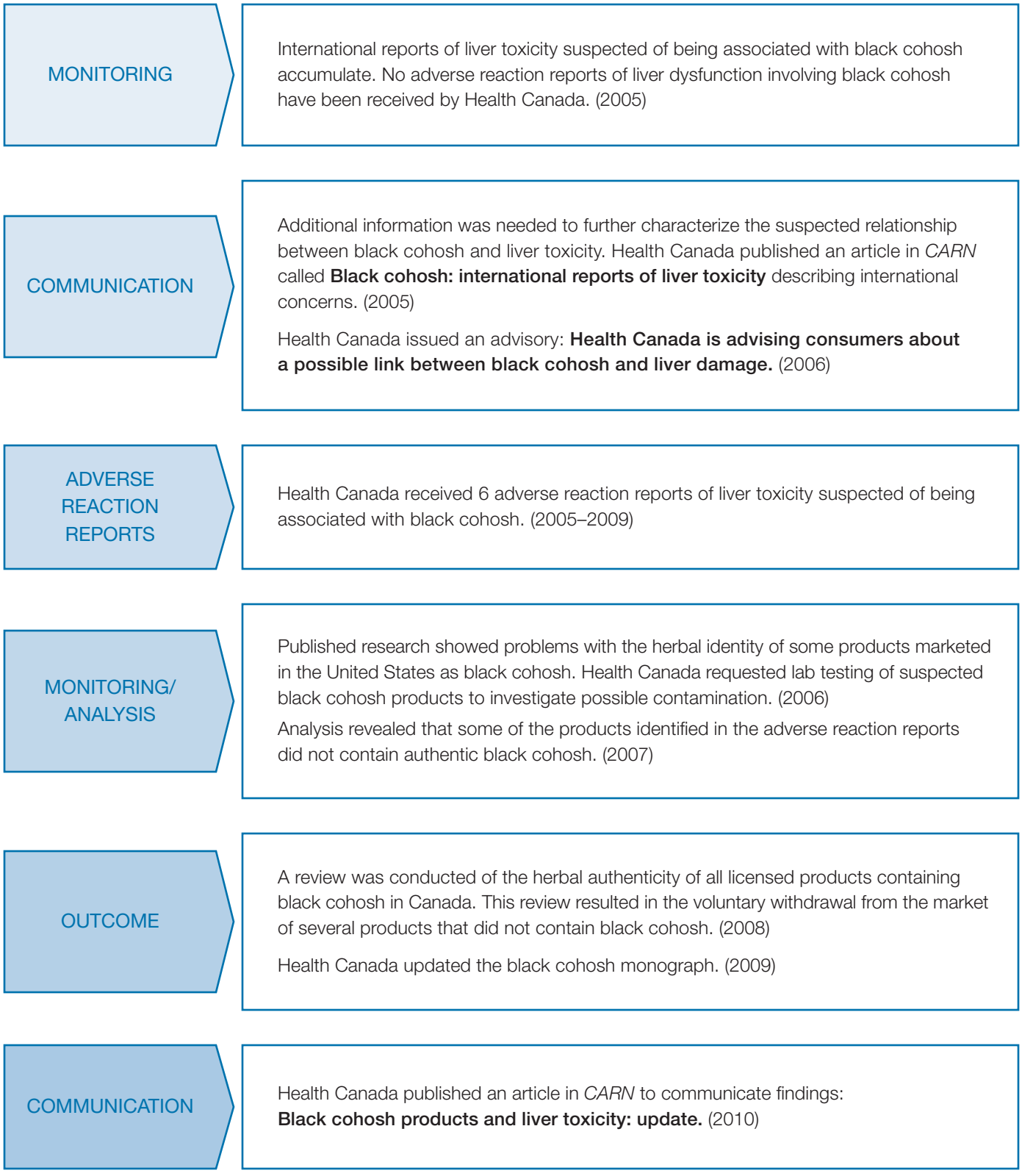

Fig. 2: Example of how a safety issue involving a natural health product evolved over time

Adverse reactions (ARs) to health products are considered to be suspicions, as a definite causal association often cannot be determined.
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Quarterly summary of health professional and consumer advisories

(posted between May 18, 2013 and August 18, 2013)

Date*	Product	Subject
Aug 6 & 9	Votrient (pazopanib hydrochloride)	Change to frequency of liver test monitoring
Aug 6	Nova Max blood glucose test strips	Recall: may give false high results
Aug 2	Safeway and Compliments Ibuprofen Liquid Capsules	Recall: labelling error
Aug 2	Certain Sandoz products for injection	Possible volume under-fill of some vials
July 31	Synthetic calcitonin (salmon) nasal spray	Market withdrawal of all products
July 31	Calcimar (synthetic salmon calcitonin—solution for injection)	Increased risk of cancer with long-term use
July 29	Rituxan (rituximab)	Hepatitis B virus recurrence: updates on screening and management
July 26	Compliments Iron Ferrous Gluconate Tablets	Recall: labelling error
July 23	Progesta-Care Body Cream, DHEA 25 Age-Free and DHEA 50 Age-Free	Unauthorized health products removed from sale
July 20	Innerget Instant Erection, Innerget Prolonged Performance, Innerget Everlasting Strength and Megaton 2080	Hidden ingredients may pose serious risks to health
July 18	Voluven and Volulyte (hydroxyethyl starch)	Increased mortality and severe renal injury
July 16	Clinoleic 20%	Potential for the presence of particles
July 13	Unauthorized health products	Updated list of products from Veslon Cosmetics and Super Discount Distributing
July 12	Medtronic MiniMed Insulin Reservoirs	Recall: potential risk of a leak in the reservoir
July 8	Aclasta (zoledronic acid 5 mg/100mL)	Volume overfill in vials
July 6	Veslon Aqueous Chlorhexidine Gluconate Solution	Unauthorized health product for sale
July 5	Designer drugs	Reminder that these drugs are dangerous and illegal
June 27	“Poppers” (products containing alkyl nitrites)	May pose serious risks to health
June 24	Apo-Cephalex (cephalexin)	Recall: possible reduced efficacy
June 24	Hydroxyethyl starch solutions	Not recommended for use in some critically ill patients

Advisories can be accessed at www.health.gc.ca/medeffect.
*Date of issuance. This date may differ from the posting date.

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(posted between May 18, 2013 and August 18, 2013)

June 21	AmBisome (liposomal amphotericin B for injection)	Recall: risk of bacterial contamination
June 21	ACET-650 suppositories	Recall: mislabelling and potential overdose risk
June 20	Paradigm and Polyfin Insulin Infusion Sets	Potential of under- or over-delivery of insulin
June 19	Ketoconazole	Risk of potentially fatal liver toxicity
June 10	Intralipid 10%, 20% and 30% fat emulsion	Missing French label information
June 6	Codeine-containing products	Recommended for use only in patients aged 12 and over
June 6	Safeway Extra Strength Ibuprofen	Recall: labelling error
June 5	Eight products used as "poppers"	May pose serious risks to health
June 4	ExtenZe Plus and ExtenZe Maximum Strength	Hidden ingredients may pose serious risks to health
May 30	Amlodipine, Ciprofloxacin, Lamotrigine, Norfloxacin and Telmisartan	Recall: quality issues with various lots
May 30	Stiff Nights and Stiff 4 Hours	Hidden ingredients may pose serious risks to health
May 29	Cetrotide (cetrorelix for injection)	Increased reconstitution time for four lots
May 27 & 30	Champix (varenicline tartrate) and Zyban (bupropion hydrochloride)	Revision to the product monographs
May 25	Apo-Clindamycin, Clindamycine-150, Clindamycine-300 (clindamycin hydrochloride)	Potential contamination with quetiapine fumarate
May 24	GW501516	Serious risks associated with use of the unauthorized product
May 23	Children's Little Remedies for Fevers (grape and cherry) and Infant's Little Remedies for Fevers (berry and grape) (acetaminophen)	Recall: concerns with quality
May 17 & 18	Co Quetiapine, Riva Quetiapine and Sanis Quetiapine (quetiapine fumarate)	Recall: potential contamination with clindamycin
May 17	Magnesium Sulfate Injection USP 50% (50 mL vial)	Recall: potential presence of glass particles
May 17	Covidien Surgical Stapler Reloads	One lot of non-sterile devices stolen
May 16 & 22	Thalomid (thalidomide)	Risk of developing second cancers
May 18 to August 18	Foreign products	8 Foreign Product Alerts (FPAs) were posted during this period

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Suggestions?

Your comments are important to us. Let us know what you think by reaching us at **mhpd_dpsc@hc-sc.gc.ca**

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Canada Vigilance Program
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Online: www.health.gc.ca/medeffect

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