



Deprescribing is More Than Just Stopping Medications

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Objectives

Define “Polypharmacy”

Define “Deprescribing”

Describe the benefits of deprescribing

Describe the process of deprescribing

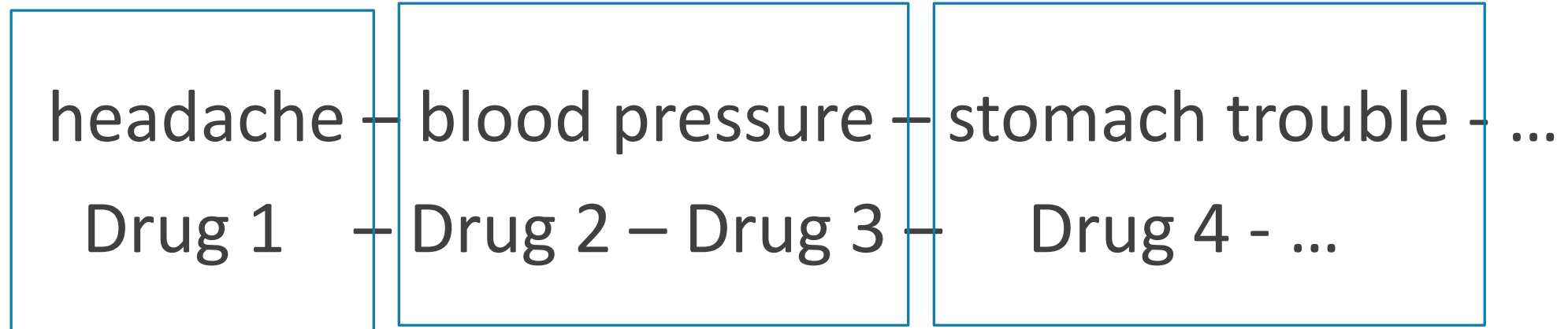


Why take medications?

- Necessary to maintain health or function
- Improve symptoms
- Manage chronic conditions
 - diabetes, high blood pressure, chronic pain, etc.
- Prolong life expectancy



Medications Time



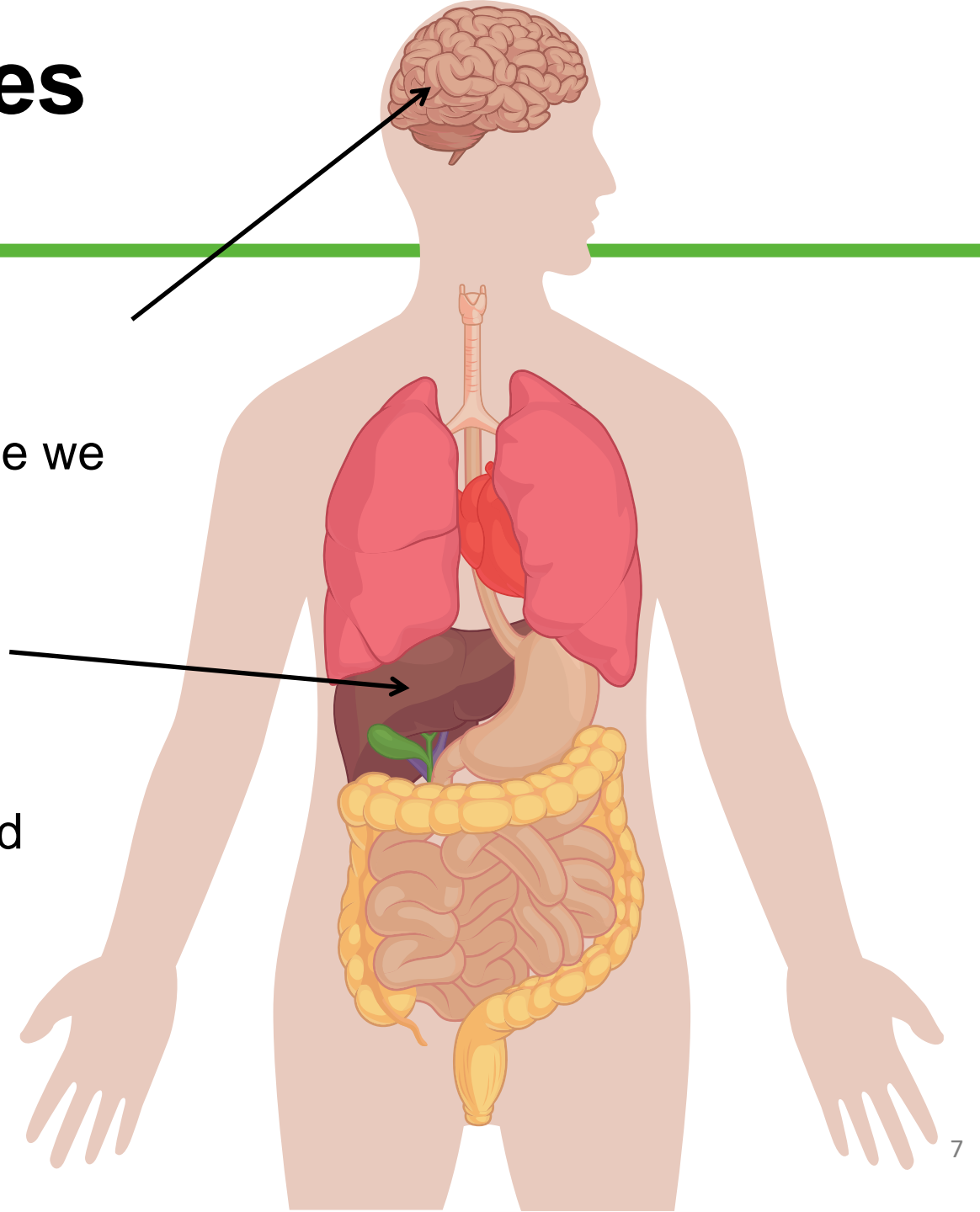


Changing Health Needs

<https://rove.me/to/nova-scotia/fall-colors>

Our body changes as we age

- The brain becomes more sensitive to drug effects
- Medications stay longer in our body because we have less muscle and more body fat
- Our liver and kidneys do not process medications as efficiently as when we were younger
- Our body contains less water and some medications can become more concentrated



How many meds?

What percentage of community-dwelling older adults take:



5 or more different prescription medications?

66%



10 or more different prescription medications?

27%



What percentage of people over age 85 take 10+ medications?

38%

What is polypharmacy?

Polypharmacy means taking a combination of medications that does more harm than good.

Polypharmacy increases the risk of harmful effects of medications, such as:

- Drug interactions
- Falls & fractures
- Memory problems
- Hospitalizations



How many meds?

What percentage of community-dwelling older adults take:

Polypharmacy



5 or more different prescription medications?

66%



Hyperpolypharmacy



10 or more different prescription medications?

27%



What percentage of people over age 85 take 10+ medications?

38%



Do
Numbers
Matter?

Higher risk of drug interactions

Medications may have unpredictable effects when they interact with each other. Interactions can lead to harmful side effects or “cancelling out” the effect of a medication.

More medications means a higher chance of interactions

For example, when taking **8 to 10 medications**, the risk of an interaction increases by **8 times**.



Higher risk of adverse drug events



What are risky medications?

- The potential risks of a medication outweigh the potential benefits



Older Canadians who take at least one risky medication

How many Canadians **over age 65** take risky medication?

31% of men

42% of women



Older Canadians who take at least one risky medication

How many Canadians over age 85 take risky medication?

39% of men

47% of women



What can be done?

Deprescribing means reducing or stopping medications that may not be beneficial or may be causing harm. The goal of deprescribing is to maintain or improve quality of life.

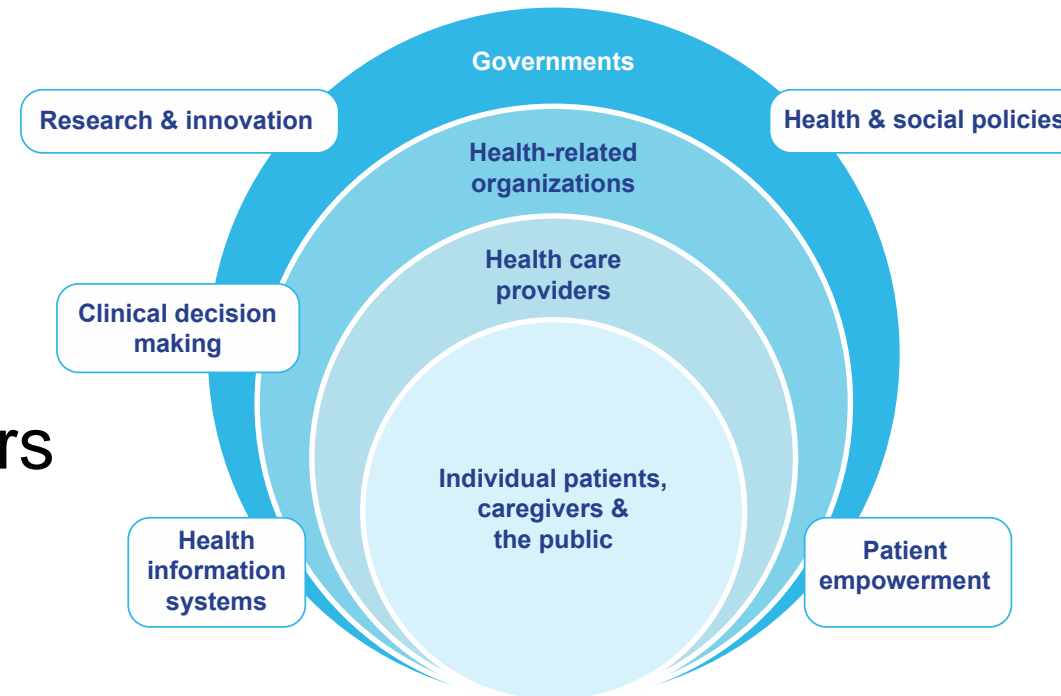


Deprescribing must always be done as a team with your doctor, nurse, and/or pharmacist.

The Canadian Deprescribing Network

The Canadian Deprescribing Network is a group of :

- Health care leaders
- Clinicians
- Decision-makers
- Academic researchers
- Patient advocates



The Canadian Deprescribing Network

Goals:

1. Raise awareness and eliminate the use of risky medications for older Canadians.
2. Ensure access to safer drug and non-drug therapies.



Where to begin

Make a special appointment with your doctor, pharmacist or nurse to ask if you can reduce your medications.

71% of older Canadians are willing to stop a medication if their doctor says it is possible.

Sirois *et al.* 2016. Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy (4):864-870



Always speak to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse before stopping any medication.

Questions to ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist

1. Why am I taking this medication?
2. What are the potential benefits and harms of this medication?
3. Can it affect my memory or cause me to fall?
4. Can I stop or reduce the dose of this medication?
5. Who do I follow up with and when?

What can you do?

- **Inform yourself** about your medications and why you are taking them.
- **Engage in a discussion** with your doctor, pharmacist or nurse about deprescribing options and alternate therapies.
- **Spread the word** about deprescribing to friends and family, advocacy groups and government representatives.

Ask questions, stay informed, be proactive, and participate in making informed choices!

Deprescribing is a part of all prescribing

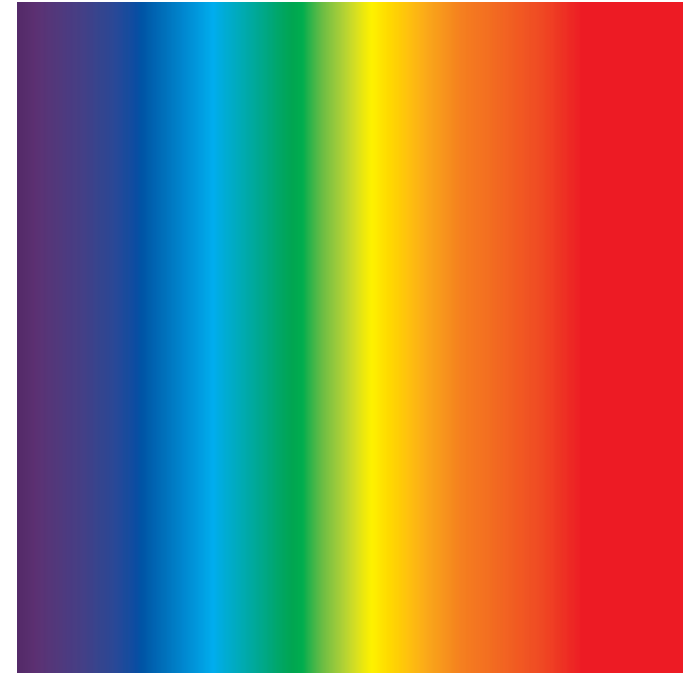


Deprescribing exists on a continuum

Dose reduction

Dose tapering

Discontinuation



Deprescribing Approach Varies

By Patient



By Drug



Resources

Download tools and resources at deprescribingnetwork.ca



Now we know

Polypharmacy

Deprescribing

Why we deprescribe

How we deprescribe

Credits

- This presentation was created and shared by the Canadian Deprescribing Network
- The Canadian Deprescribing Network is funded by the Canadian Institutes for Health Research



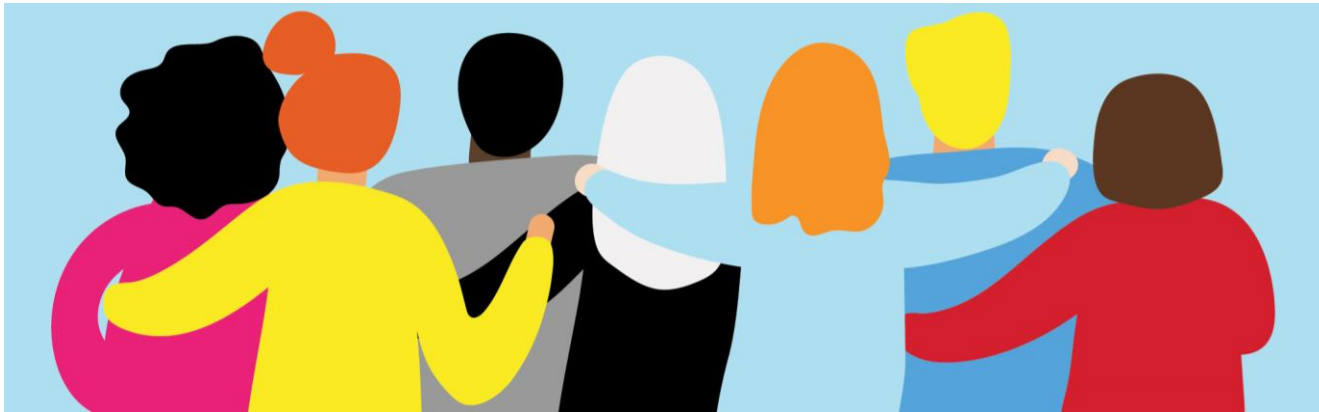
Get involved!

The Canadian Medication Appropriateness
and Deprescribing Network
Public Awareness Committee is looking for
new volunteer members



Why join?

- Help promote safe use of medications for older Canadians.
- Connect with a group of engaged individuals who advocate for medication safety at the local, provincial or national level.



Who are we looking for?

- Members of the public from diverse cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds
- Lived experience with medication use, as a patient or caregiver
- Have a strong interest for medication safety

Interested? Contact Ninh Khuong,
Network Coordinator at

info@caden-recad.ca



Connect, Contact, or Join Me at -

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