Drugs requiring special attention

Drugs with a narrow therapeutic range (i.e. with little difference between therapeutic and toxic doses) require special attention, as drug interactions are more likely to result in serious toxicity or unintentional poisoning. These include cyclosporine, warfarin, sulphonylureas, phenytoin, tricyclic antidepressants, lithium, theophylline, digoxin, etc.

Prevention

** Taking the time to learn about drug interactions may be critical to your health.

- Read the label before you use an over-the-counter or prescription medicine.
- You can reduce the risk of potentially harmful drug interactions by having a better knowledge of the medicines you take. Information on drug interactions is normally listed in the prescribing information, in the patient information leaflet, or on the container for each medicine.
- People being cared for by several doctors are at higher risk of drug-drug interactions because each doctor may not know all of the drugs being taken. People can reduce this risk by keeping each doctor informed about all the medicines being taken.
- You should consult your doctor and pharmacist for further information if in doubt.

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DRUG INTERACTIONS AND UNINTENTIONAL POISONING

What You Should Know About

香港中毒防控網絡
Hong Kong Poison Control Network

You should be familiar with the medicines you take.
If you take several different medicines, see more than one doctor, or have certain health problems, you and your doctors need to know about all the medicines you take. Doing so will help avoid potential problems such as drug interactions and unintentional poisoning.

What are drug interactions?

Drug-drug interactions are changes in a drug's effects caused by another drug taken during the same time period.

What are the possible effects of drug interactions?

Drug interactions may make your drug less effective, enhance the effect of a drug, or increase the risk of side effects and unintentional poisoning.

For example, mixing a drug you take to help you sleep (a hypnotic) and a drug you take for allergies (an antihistamine) can slow your reactions and make driving a car or operating machinery dangerous.

Are drug interactions common?

The more medicines (either prescription or over-the-counter medicines) you take, the greater the chance for them to interact and cause problems. The risk of drug interactions also depends on the tendency of particular drugs to interact, and the amount of drug taken.