



MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

Sleeping pills won't do seniors much good, Choosing Wisely Canada says

Campaign to prevent unnecessary testing and treatment launches second phase for informed decision making and right care

OTTAWA (Oct. 29, 2014) — [Sleeping pills](#) don't provide enough extra sleep for older Canadians to warrant the risk of deadly side effects — and doctors and patients alike should think twice about their use, Dr. Wendy Levinson, chair of *Choosing Wisely Canada*, said today.

Nearly one third of older people take sleeping pills even though they have special risks for this age group, Dr. Levinson said. There are safer and better ways to improve sleep or reduce anxiety.

Sleeping pills affect the brain and spinal cord as sedative-hypnotics or tranquilizers. Side effects for seniors can range from next-day drowsiness to constipation and trouble urinating. They also can double the risk of falls and hip fractures which are common among seniors.

"The ads may promise lots of blissful sleep, but studies show those who use sleeping pills only sleep a little longer and better than those who don't," Dr. Levinson said. "Seniors and their doctors should look hard at nondrug treatments just as they should be holding healthy conversations generally about unnecessary testing and treatment."

Nondrug treatments that should be discussed with physicians include everything from regular exercise to avoiding caffeine after 3 p.m., or earlier in some cases.

Dr. Levinson made the comments in conjunction with an announcement that 12 additional medical specialty societies and six new community partners have joined the *Choosing Wisely Canada* campaign. The new partners bring the number of [specialty societies and community partners participating in the campaign to 21 and 6 respectively](#).

The 12 new specialty societies released [61 new physicians' recommendations](#) at a press conference today to encourage doctor-patient communication in true patient-centered care and value.



“Our aim is to encourage a culture change in which patients and physicians no longer assume that more is automatically better in high-quality care,” said Dr. Cindy Forbes, president-elect of the Canadian Medical Association.

“This is a physician-led exercise that involves patients in decisions about their care that is based on the latest and best evidence.”

The *Choosing Wisely Canada* campaign originally got underway in Ontario and has since been endorsed by all provincial and territorial medical associations – they are an integral part of implementing the campaign in their respective provinces. The Québec Medical Association has played a leadership role since the beginning of the launch of [Choisir avec soin](#), the French version of *Choosing Wisely Canada*.

Video reactions to the Choosing Wisely campaign from spokespeople from specialty societies and community partners can be downloaded here:

<http://www.skyflyproductions.com/ChoosingWiselyCanada>

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*[Choosing Wisely Canada](#) is a campaign to help physicians and patients engage in healthy conversations about potentially unnecessary tests, treatments and procedures, and to help physicians and patients make smart and effective choices to ensure high-quality care. It got underway initially in Ontario and has been endorsed by all provincial and territorial medical associations who have established mechanisms to support the adoption of the *Choosing Wisely Canada* lists. It is now a truly national campaign.*

The [Canadian Medical Association \(CMA\)](#) is the national voice of Canadian physicians. Founded in 1867, the CMA is a voluntary professional organization representing more than 80,000 of Canada’s physicians and comprising 12 provincial and territorial medical associations and 60 national medical organizations. CMA’s mission is helping physicians care for patients. The CMA will be the leader in engaging and serving physicians and be the national voice for the highest standards for health and health care.

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Quotes from Spokespeople for Specialty Societies and Community Partners

Canadian Society of Endocrinology and Metabolism

“Good medicine is all about using evidence-based knowledge to the patient’s benefit. Choosing Wisely is part of that tradition and that’s why we are proud to be supporters.”

- Dr. Ilana Halperin, Canadian Society of Endocrinology and Metabolism

Canadian Society of Nephrology

“A two-way conversation between physician and patient is vital to good medicine. That’s why Choosing Wisely’s messages are so important on both sides of the examining table.”

- Dr. Rory McQuillan, Canadian Society of Nephrology

Canadian Partnership Against Cancer

“We have a responsibility to provide our patients with high value cancer care; this can be challenging with the multiple types and complexities of modern-day cancer treatment. In bringing multiple different specialty groups together, the Canadian cancer Choosing Wisely Canada list takes a wider look at cancer care that is not limited to any single type of treatment. The overall goal should be to provide the highest quality care to our patients - this means we must avoid tests and treatments that have no proven benefit or are harmful, as these consume resources that could be better used elsewhere.”

- Dr. Geoff Porter Canadian Partnership Against Cancer

Canadian Association of Radiation Oncology

“All three professional oncology associations collaborated in the creation of the Choosing Wisely Canada list of most relevance to Canadians affected by cancer.”

- Dr Andrea Bezjak, Canadian Association of Radiation Oncology

Canadian Society of Palliative Care Physicians

“All physicians know the importance of effective communication with patients in the provision of quality health care. Choosing Wisely Canada will help make the process easier for both.”

- Dr. Jeff Myers, Canadian Society of Palliative Care Physicians



Canadian Association of Gastroenterology

“The Canadian Association of Gastroenterology is committed to patient care and leads a number of important initiatives to ensure timely access to quality service across Canada. Adding our voice to wave two of the Choosing Wisely Canada campaign was a natural fit for our organization.”

- Dr. Paul Moayyedi, Canadian Association of Gastroenterology

Canadian Association of Pathologists

“Working to improve quality health care across the country is a goal that the Canadian Association of Pathologists is pleased to lend their support to. As an organization, we promote high quality standards for patient care through national leadership, and the Choosing Wisely Canada campaign provides information to assist our members in achieving this goal.”

- Dr. Christopher Naugler, Canadian Association of Pathologists

Canadian Hematology Society

“Providing opportunities for physicians and patients to engage in communication is critical for guaranteeing high-quality care. Choosing Wisely Canada provides lists of procedures and tests that doctors and patients should question, in order to for them to make smart and effective health care choices, together.”

- Dr. Chris Hillis, Canadian Hematology Society

Canadian Society for Transfusion Medicine

“The Canadian Society for Transfusion Medicine is proud to be joining 11 other medical specialty societies for the launch of the second wave of the Choosing Wisely Canada campaign. It is exciting to see how the physician community has embraced this campaign and honoured our responsibility to maximize the safe and appropriate management of blood and related products and deliver the best possible, evidence-based care to patients.”

- Dr. Irene Sadek, Canadian Society for Transfusion Medicine

Canadian Urological Association

“The Canadian Urological Association is dedicated to enabling the profession to provide the highest possible standards of care to Canadians through advocacy, education, research and practice support tools. Our partnership in the Choosing Wisely Canada campaign provides our members with the tools and leadership to make a difference.”

- Dr. Tony Finelli, Canadian Urological Association



Occupational Medicine Specialists of Canada:

“I am proud to lend my support to the physician and patient materials developed by Choosing Wisely Canada. The Occupational Medicine Specialists of Canada recognize the importance of health promotion and prevention in mitigating illness and injury, and the importance of working collaboratively with other physicians and community stakeholders to help spread the word to the public.”

- Dr. Joan Saary, Occupational Medicine Specialists of Canada:

Canadian Medical Association Forum on General and Family Practice Issues:

“Ensuring physicians and patients are making smart and appropriate health-care choices together: that is a message that the Canadian Medical Association Forum on General and Family Practice Issues is pleased to lend their continued support to as part of wave two of the Choosing Wisely Canada campaign.”

- Dr. Lisa Bonang, Canadian Medical Association Forum on General and Family Practice Issues

College of Family Physicians of Canada:

“I am pleased to celebrate another important milestone in the Choosing Wisely Canada campaign, as we bring together twelve more specialty societies to release 61 new recommendations. This information will be critical in our continued work to improve health care across the country.”

- Dr. Jamie Meuser, College of Family Physicians of Canada

National Association of Federal Retirees:

“We immediately recognized the importance of providing the public with practical, easy-to-follow advice on a number of topics, including treating heartburn, insomnia and sleeping pills, and heart tests before surgery to name a few.”

- Ms. Sylvia Ceacero, CEO, National Association of Federal Retirees

Canadian Association of Retired Teachers:

“The Choosing Wisely Campaign encourages physicians and patients to have healthy conversations about potentially unnecessary tests, treatments and procedures. That is something to get excited about.”

- Ms. JoAnn Lauber, President of the Canadian Association of Retired Teachers



Gastrointestinal Society:

“As a registered charity working toward creating a better health care system for patients affected by digestive illnesses, the Gastrointestinal Society is a proud supporter of Choosing Wisely Canada.”

- Ms. Gail Attara, President and CEO

Canadian Association of Social Workers:

“The campaign continues to help physicians and patients better develop shared knowledge that effective choices and high-quality care for patients.”

- Fred Phelps, MSW RSW, Executive Director, Canadian Association of Social Workers.

Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance:

“The Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance (CAPA) and its members worked with the Canadian Rheumatology Association on the campaign. CAPA aims to educate, raise awareness, advocate for access to treatments, and this collaboration was a natural fit.”

- Dawn Richards, Vice- President