

Drugs in Cyberspace: Part 1

By Barrie McCombs, MD, CCFP, FCFP
Medical Information Service (MIS), University of Calgary

Searches for drug-related information are one of the most common information-seeking tasks for physicians and other health professionals. This article reviews some of the available sources for such information.

CPS

<http://www.cdnpharm.ca>

The Compendium of Pharmaceuticals and Specialties (CPS) is produced by the Canadian Pharmacists Association and distributed free to Canadian physicians. From the “Health Care Professionals” tab at the top of the page, you’ll find the Drug and Therapeutics Info section of the site. In this section, there is the “CPS/CNP Updates,” where you can access a searchable list of new drugs on the market. This section also contains updated information not available in the current paper edition.

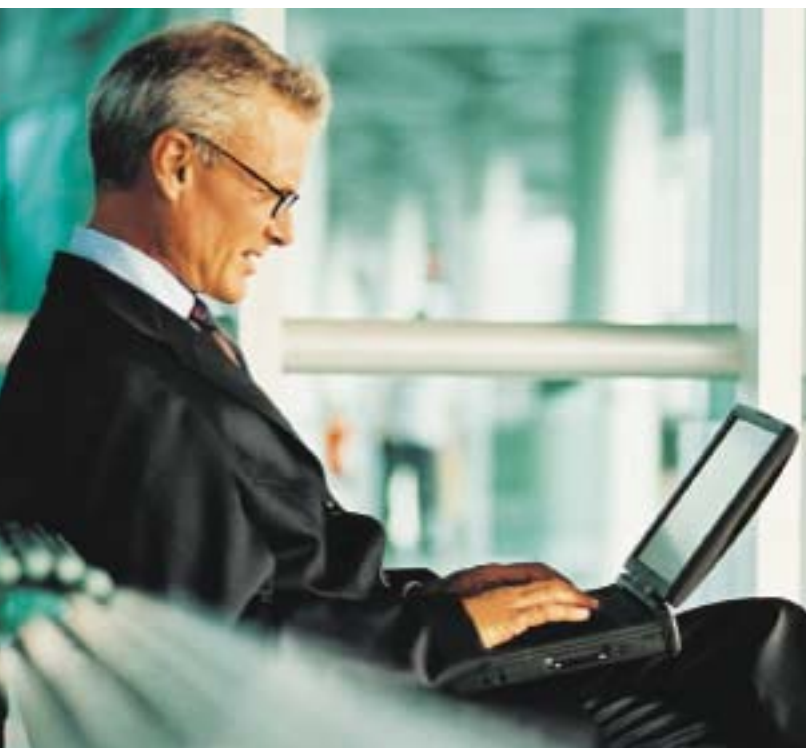
Most pharmaceutical companies provide a toll-free information hotline. These numbers are listed in the CPS yellow pages.



Poison Centres

<http://www.laters.com/poiscntr.htm>

This site lists the Canadian poison control centres. Some poison centres have an associated drug information service. There is also a list in the CPS yellow pages.



CMA Medication Database

<http://cma.ca>

Members of the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) can access this new database, located in the “Membership Benefits” section of the CMA home page. The sections include: Drug Monographs, Anti-microbial Therapy, Comparison Charts, Pediatric Dosages, Medical Calculations, Natural Products, Travel Information, and Patient Information. Drug monographs are brief, for future download to hand-held computers.

Health Canada Drug Advisories

http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hpb-dgps/therapeut/htmleng/advhp_e.html

This site records the drug advisories issued by Health Canada and Canadian pharmaceutical companies. A recent advisory covered the gastrointestinal effects of celecoxib.

Mediresource Drug Information

<http://www.mediresource.com/pages/ndrug.htm>

Mediresource.com is a Canadian Web site containing selected patient-oriented drug monographs. The monographs include lists of possible interactions.