

# The Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP)

## Who We Are

We are a nonprofit healthcare agency comprised of pharmacists, nurses, and physicians. Founded in 1994, our organization is dedicated to learning about medication errors, understanding their system-based causes, and disseminating practical recommendations that can help healthcare providers, consumers, and the pharmaceutical industry prevent errors.

## Who We Are NOT

We are not a governmental, regulatory, licensing, inspecting, or accrediting agency. While we work collaboratively with these types of agencies to influence medication safety, we do not set healthcare standards or require individual organizations to implement the recommendations we make.

## How We Are Funded

As a nonprofit agency, we rely on charitable donations, unrestricted grants, subscriptions to our newsletters, and fees from our consulting and educational services. We are not funded by the pharmaceutical industry and do not accept advertising in any of our publications.

## How We Learn About Medication Errors



Over 25 years ago, we started a voluntary error-reporting program to learn about medication errors that were happening across the nation. In January 1994, ISMP was chartered as a nonprofit agency to further this work. Today, the program, now called the USP-ISMP Medication Errors Reporting Program (MERP), continues to thrive. Each year, hundreds of healthcare professionals trust us enough to report errors to this program to help us learn about errors, understand their causes, and share the “lessons learned” with others. You, too, can report errors through our website ([www.ismp.org](http://www.ismp.org)), email ([ismpinfo@ismp.org](mailto:ismpinfo@ismp.org)), or by calling **1-800-FAIL-SAF(E)**.

## How We Keep Error Reports Confidential



While we share stories about medication errors in our publications and through other educational efforts, we have never disclosed the specific location of an event, the people involved, or the person who reported the error. When necessary, less important details about an error may be changed to ensure that inadvertent recognition of the error is not possible. In addition, if healthcare facilities seek our advice about a medication error or other medication safety issues, facility-specific recommendations are not disclosed publicly, even in a blinded manner.

## Other Ways We Can Help

Over the years, we’ve developed numerous publications, programs, and tools designed to help healthcare professionals prevent medication errors. For example, we:

- publish three professional newsletters and one consumer newsletter (collectively reaching millions of readers)
- conduct frequent educational programs, including teleconferences, on medication safety issues
- offer posters, videos, patient brochures, books, and other drug safety tools
- conduct on-site risk assessments of medication safety in healthcare facilities and respond to sentinel events.

## How We Learn about Error-Reduction Strategies



Many years of analyzing medication error reports have enabled us to suggest credible error-reduction strategies. We are in constant contact with an advisory panel of practicing healthcare professionals, researchers, and experts in human factors and medication safety, who collectively help us offer evidence-based and practical error-reduction strategies that work. In addition, our staff spends considerable time in healthcare facilities learning first-hand about innovative medication safety practices so we can share these ideas with others.

## What’s Available On Our Website

We offer a wide variety of free educational materials and services on our website ([www.ismp.org](http://www.ismp.org)):

- Special Medication Hazard Alerts
- Searchable information on a wide variety of medication safety topics
- Answers to *Frequently Asked Questions* about medication safety
- FDA Patient Safety Videos
- Three *Pathways for Medication Safety Tools*:
  - a model strategic plan for medication safety
  - risk assessment tools and questions for clinicians
  - readiness assessment for bedside bar coding
- White papers on bar-coding technology and electronic prescribing
- A monitored *Message Board* to share questions, answers, and ideas.

**You can trust ISMP to be an expert source of medication safety information.**