

## Key Messages

- Sunday, July 24, 2016 is [International Self-Care Day](#) and [Consumer Health Products Canada](#), the industry association that represents the makers of evidence-based, over-the-counter medicines and natural health products, is raising awareness of the important role self-care plays in the health of Canadians and the sustainability of our health care system.
- According to the [International Self-Care Foundation](#) self-care includes not just using medicines and products responsibly, but also includes the concepts of health literacy, awareness of one's risk factors, being physically active, eating a healthy diet, avoiding risks like smoking, getting plenty of rest and practicing good hygiene.
- Canadians practice self-care when they make responsible decisions that help them prevent disease, treat minor ailments such as cough/colds, heartburn, headaches, allergies, and bug bites, or manage the symptoms of chronic diseases like the pain of arthritis.
- We practice self-care when we use Polysporin® to treat a minor cut at the cottage, apply Coppertone® to block the sun or take Zantac® or Tums® for heartburn.
- When Canadians practice self-care, they can avoid unnecessary visits to their family doctor, walk-in clinic or emergency room, saving the health care system significant resources.
- According to [research](#) commissioned by Consumer Health Products Canada, more than three quarters of Canadians prefer to manage their minor ailments like colds, headaches, allergies, heartburn, and minor acne.
- Self-care is the true frontline of the Canadian health care system. If only one in seven Canadians who saw a family doctor in 2014 for a minor ailment practiced self-care instead, enough doctor resources would be freed up to provide primary care to more than 500,000 Canadians who don't currently have a family doctor.

### Here are three things people can do to practice more self-care:

- Always read and follow the label directions when using over-the-counter medicines and natural health products;
- Discuss your self-care options during your next visit to your doctor, your pharmacist or trusted health professional;
- Look for government health portals or websites associated with accredited health institutions or professions, when seeking self-care advice online.

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