

## Fact Sheet: The *Be MedWise* Campaign

The *Be MedWise* is a national public education initiative launched in January 2002 to promote the safe and appropriate use of nonprescription, over-the-counter (OTC) medicines. Spearheaded by the National Council on Patient Information and Education (NCPIE) -- a non-profit coalition of health-related organizations -- the campaign's goal is to raise awareness that OTC medicines, like prescription drugs, can carry risks if taken incorrectly. As such, this multi-year program focuses on such practical solutions as: reading OTC labels, comparing product ingredients, understanding how OTC medicines should be used most effectively, and stimulating communications between consumers and health professionals about appropriate OTC medicine use.

Coinciding with the recent move to a standardized "Drug Facts" label on the majority of nonprescription drugs, the campaign employs a wide variety of media channels – the mass media, print and broadcast advertising, the Internet and consumer education materials – to help Americans select and use OTC medicines wisely. This includes a comprehensive Web site – [www.bemedwise.org](http://www.bemedwise.org) – where consumers, health professionals, educators, and the media can get detailed information about the OTC label and how to compare products, learn about dosages, and understand information about specific warnings.

Briefly, the *Be MedWise* campaign is designed to:

- ✓ Help the medical community meet the public health goal stated in *Healthy People 2010* (Chapter 17) to increase patient counseling regarding the use of prescription and OTC medicines;
- ✓ Educate consumers about recognizing and using the federally-mandated "Drug Facts" label, which now appears on the majority of OTC drug products;
- ✓ Promote the three "Rs" of safe OTC use: Respect, Risk, and Responsibility; and
- ✓ Leverage NCPIE's extensive coalition to communicate the importance of using OTC medicines safely in communities nationwide.

The program is currently supported through unrestricted educational grants from Procter & Gamble Health Sciences Institute and McNeil Consumer & Specialty Pharmaceuticals.

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