

## Health Canada Advisory Regarding Gentian Violet

**Attention:** Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Family Health Teams, Central LHIN, NSM LHIN, Midwives, Pharmacies

**Date:** July 12, 2019

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**Health Canada has released an advisory warning Canadians of the potential cancer risk associated with the use of gentian violet.** The manufacturers of human and veterinary drugs have stopped producing drug products containing gentian violet in Canada and the product licenses have been cancelled. Health Canada has not recalled the human drug. The advisory is available at: <http://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/recall-alert-rappel-avis/hc-sc/2019/70179a-eng.php>

Gentian Violet Liquid Topical had been used to treat skin and mucous membrane infections. Some breastfeeding parents have used this non-prescription drug to treat infants with oral thrush. It is important that health care providers are aware of the cancellation of the product licenses so that they can inform their clients not to use any previously purchased gentian violet for the treatment of candida infections (thrush).

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit has previously distributed [Toronto Public Health Breastfeeding Protocols for Health Care Providers \(2013\)](https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/9102-tph-breastfeeding-protocols-1-to-21-complete-manual-2013.pdf) (<https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/9102-tph-breastfeeding-protocols-1-to-21-complete-manual-2013.pdf>) to some primary health care providers in Simcoe County and the District of Muskoka. Health care providers who have the hard-copy resource are asked to review "Protocol 15 – Candidiasis (Thrush)" and cross-out the reference to gentian violet. The revised version of Breastfeeding Protocols for Health Care providers can be accessed online at <https://breastfeedingresourcesontario.ca/resource/breastfeeding-protocols-health-care-providers>.

Pharmacies are asked to ensure that gentian violet is no longer available for purchase.

Health Canada advises Canadians to:

- Stop using all drug products that contain gentian violet, including on animals. Products for humans should be returned to a pharmacy for proper disposal. Animal owners can discuss options for the safe disposal of their products with their veterinarians or local pharmacies.<sup>1</sup>
- Do not use dressings containing gentian violet for longer than six months or if you are pregnant or nursing.<sup>1</sup>

1. Health Canada. Recalls and safety alerts: health Canada warns Canadians of potential cancer risk associated with gentian violet [webpage]. Ottawa: Health Canada; 2019 [Last update: 2019 Jun 27]. Available from: <https://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/recall-alert-rappel-avis/hc-sc/2019/70179a-eng.php>



