

PRESS RELEASE

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#MEDSafetyWeek Highlights the Importance of Reporting Adverse Drug Reactions

Release Date: 5 November, 2025



The British Virgin Islands has joined over 130 countries across the globe to celebrate the 10th anniversary of **#MedSafetyWeek**, an international campaign highlighting the importance of reporting suspected side effects from medicines and medical devices.

This year the week takes place from **3 to 9 November** under the theme *“You and I can help make medicines safer for everyone.”* This year’s theme encourages patients, families, caregivers and healthcare professionals to become active partners in improving medicine safety.

Chief of Drugs and Pharmaceutical Services Mrs. Gracia Wheatley-Smith said “Medicines save lives every day, but sometimes they can cause unintended effects. By reporting these side effects, you help regulators take timely action to make medicines safer for everyone. Each report matters, because each report represents a life protected,” Mrs. Wheatley-Smith explained.

Globally, only five to 10 percent of suspected side effects are ever reported. This means that most safety concerns go unseen. Through **#MedSafetyWeek**, the BVI joins the international call to action to listen, to report, and to care.

According to Mrs. Wheatley-Smith the main reasons that people don’t report side effects is because they don’t know it’s possible to report them, they don’t think their experience matters, or they simply forget.

This campaign, now in its tenth year, seeks to change that, by educating communities on how and where to report. “Medicine safety starts with you and me,” Mrs. Wheatley-Smith emphasized. “It’s not only the responsibility of doctors, pharmacists, or regulators. Everyone has a role to play. Speaking up could help protect someone else.”

The community is being urged to:

- **Ask questions** about your medications: know their names, purposes, and possible side effects.
- **Share awareness:** Use your voice and your social media platforms to promote the **#MedSafetyWeek** message.

- **Engage your community:** Pharmacies, clinics, and wellness advocates are encouraged to display campaign posters and invite clients to take photos with their pharmacists using the hashtag **#MedSafetyWeek**.
- **Report any unusual reactions** or unexpected effects to your doctor, pharmacist, nurse or directly to the Office of the Chief of Drugs and Pharmaceutical Services by calling 468-9850 or emailing grwheatley-smith@gov.vg.
- Analysis of the side effects reported causes actions to be taken and these actions make medicines safer for everyone.

#MedSafetyWeek is coordinated by the **Uppsala Monitoring Centre (UMC)**, the World Health Organization's Collaborating Centre for International Drug Monitoring, in partnership with national authorities and members of the **International Coalition of Medicines Regulatory Authorities (ICMRA)**. The campaign is supported by WHO and other international partners across 117 countries and 60 languages.

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Additional Documents or Media

- [medsafetyweek_highlights_the_importance_of_report_adverse_drug_reactions.pdf](#)