

PRESS RELEASE

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Patient Bill of Rights to Promote Safe and Informed Pharmaceutical Care

Release Date: 28 July, 2026



The Ministry of Health and Social Development, has launched a **Patient Bill of Rights** brochure to promote the safe and effective use of medicines throughout the Virgin Islands.

Chief of Drugs and Pharmaceutical Services, Mrs. Gracia Wheatley-Smith, said the initiative forms part of the Ministry's ongoing commitment to improving pharmaceutical services and ensuring that patients understand both their rights and responsibilities when accessing pharmaceutical care.

"Medicines play a critical role in maintaining health and preventing and treating disease, but achieving the best health outcomes requires a partnership between patients and healthcare professionals, Mrs. Wheatley-Smith said. The Patient Bill of Rights empowers individuals to become active participants in their care by encouraging them to ask questions, understand their medications, and work collaboratively with their pharmacist."

The Patient Bill of Rights outlines the standards of care that every patient should expect when receiving pharmaceutical services. These include the right to be treated with dignity and respect, receive medications that are safe and effective, have confidential pharmaceutical care, and receive counselling from a qualified pharmacist on the proper use of prescribed and over the counter medicines. Patients also have the right to ask questions about their medications and receive clear information regarding dosage, possible side effects, drug interactions, storage requirements, and the safe use of their medicines.

Mrs. Wheatley-Smith emphasized that informed patients are better equipped to manage their health and reduce the risk of medication errors or adverse drug reactions.

"Your pharmacist is one of your most valuable healthcare partners, she said. Whether you are taking prescription medicines, over-the-counter products or herbal supplements, sharing complete and accurate information enables your pharmacist to identify potential interactions and provide guidance that supports your health and safety."

The brochure also highlights the important role patients play in achieving successful treatment outcomes. Patients are encouraged to provide accurate information about their medical history, allergies, current medications, and herbal supplements. They are also asked to follow prescribed treatment plans, ask questions whenever clarification is needed and adopt healthy lifestyle habits that complement their medication therapy.

In addition, the Patient Bill of Rights encourages patients to become familiar with common questions that should be discussed with their pharmacist, including whether medications should be taken with food, how medicines should be stored, whether herbal supplements may interfere with treatment, and why medications should not be shared with others, even when symptoms appear similar.

Mrs. Wheatley-Smith added, "Every conversation between a patient and pharmacist is an opportunity to improve health outcomes. We encourage residents to ask questions, seek advice, and become informed partners in their own care."

The Ministry of Health and Social Development encourages all residents to take an active role in their healthcare by learning about their medications, communicating openly with their healthcare providers, and making informed decisions that support safe and effective treatment.

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Additional Documents or Media

- [patient_bill_of_rights.pdf](#)