

RTE Primetime Programme on Codeine Addiction



RTE Primetime's programme on Wednesday 4 October focused on codeine addiction and included 'secret shopper' footage featuring a woman buying Nurofen Plus in different pharmacies in order to assess how guidelines on the sale of codeine products are being followed.

The IPU provided the below statement to the programme in advance of the broadcast:

Statement from Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU)

The Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) is aware of the impact and seriousness of codeine dependency and abuse. We have been actively working with our stakeholders in Ireland and Europe for many years to further develop guidance to support pharmacists in their practice.

We fully support all public health measures in place to educate patients on the risks associated with misuse of codeine and advise all pharmacists to ensure they are fully compliant with guidelines.

A primary role of the IPU is to support our professional community pharmacist members to enable them to consistently deliver high-quality, safe, patient-focused advice and services.

We provide this support to pharmacists through continuing professional development

programmes on substance misuse. The IPU also provides protocols, information, and support for the safe sale and supply of non-prescription codeine-containing medicinal products in accordance with guidance from the pharmacy regulator (PSI).

The IPU, in collaboration with the Irish Pharmaceutical Healthcare Association (September 2015), developed a protocol for the sale of codeine-containing medicines. The purpose of the protocol is to provide clear guidance and support to pharmacists on:

- The safe sale and supply of these products, and
- Counselling provided to patients that require non-prescription codeine medicinal products.

We urge anyone who believes that they may require support to talk to a healthcare professional or to contact the confidential HSE Drug and Alcohol Helpline on 1800 459 459 or via email: helpline@hse.ie. If you have a friend or family member that may be affected and you wish to seek additional information, we recommend visiting the [drugs.ie](https://www.drugs.ie) website.

The IPU will continue to engage with stakeholders in any future health awareness campaigns.