

# WISE USE OF MEDICINES

**M**edicines are drugs or other substances used to keep you healthy and treat or prevent illness. When you use them wisely they will do you the most good. However, if you use them incorrectly or unwisely, medicines can cause problems or even be harmful.



## RISKS

There is a greater risk of medicines causing problems if you:

- take them other than as directed
- are taking other prescription or non-prescription medicines
- have kidney, liver or stomach problems
- drink alcohol
- are pregnant or may become pregnant
- are breastfeeding
- take medicines prescribed for someone else
- are allergic to any of the substances in the medicines.

Always check with your doctor or pharmacist before taking new medicines.

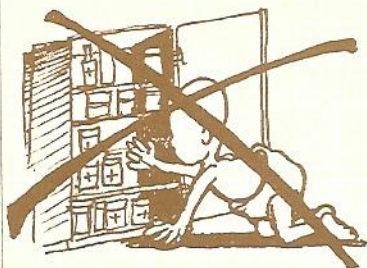
## SELF CARE

- Know the name of each medicine and why you are taking/using it.
- Read labels carefully and follow the instructions you are given.
- Use a standard medicine measure for all liquid medicines.
- Shake liquids and aerosols well when directed.
- Swallow tablets or capsules with a full glass of water, standing or sitting up if possible.
- Don't take other people's medicines.
- Don't stop or change the dose or time you take your medicine without your doctor's or pharmacist's advice.
- Contact your doctor or pharmacist if a medicine you are taking is causing side effects.
- Talk to your doctor and pharmacist before taking any new medicine if you are, or think you may be pregnant, or you are breastfeeding.

- Have your medicines reviewed by your doctor and pharmacist at least every 6 months.

## Storage

- Keep medicines in their original containers.
- Store all medicines in a cool dry place, out of reach and sight of children.
- Return all old or unwanted medicine to your pharmacist for safe disposal.



## UNDERSTANDING MEDICINES

### Questions to ask your doctor



- What is the diagnosis?
- How long is this condition likely to last?
- What is the name of the medicine you have prescribed for me?
- How does this medicine work?
- How should I use/take it?
- When should I stop using it or have it reviewed?
- What else can I do to help myself?
- How long will I need this medicine for?
- Should I expect to feel any different while taking this medicine?
- Can you fill in my *Medi-List* card? (available from your pharmacist).

### IMPORTANT

If you believe you or anyone else has taken an overdose of a medicine, get emergency help (see Contact section), even if there are no signs of poisoning. Signs of severe poisoning may not appear for 2 to 4 days after the overdose is taken, but treatment must be started straight away.

### Questions to ask your pharmacist



- What is the best way to take or use this medicine?
- What food, drink, activity or storage might affect how well this medicine works?
- Can I have a copy of the Consumer Product Information (CPI) for this medicine?
- What side effects (if any) are likely?
- Will this medicine interact with any other drugs I use? (e.g. medicines, alcohol, nicotine)
- What should I do if I miss a dose?
- How can you help me remember to take my medicines?
- What other information should I be aware of?
- Can you fill in my *Medi-List* card?



Your local **Self Care** pharmacist

### Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you:

- are taking medicines prescribed by other doctors or dentists
- are taking non-prescription medicines
- think your medicine is causing side effects – keep a record
- become pregnant while taking any medicine.

### Recommended Reading:

The labels of all prescribed and non-prescription medicines you are taking.

Consumer Product Information (CPI) - ask your pharmacist and doctor.

### Contact:

Your General Practitioner (listed under Medical Practitioners in the yellow pages of the phone book).

Poisons Information Centres  
Phone: 131 126 from anywhere in Australia

### Your Self Care pharmacist

ACT	(06)	281 1366
NSW	(02)	437 5941
VIC	(03)	9903 9600
QLD	(07)	3844 4900
SA	(08)	272 1211
WA	(09)	481 3225
TAS	(002)	312 636



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