

# Staying safe with your medicines

*Important information for patients and carers*

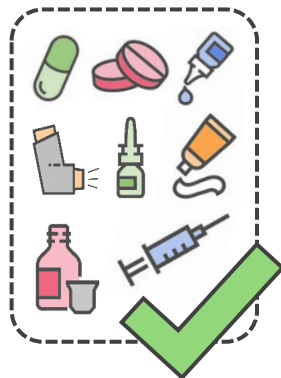


**While you are in hospital you must only take or use medicines that have been given to you by the hospital staff.**

While it might seem easier or helpful to handle your own medicines, this is how accidents can happen! Allowing us to manage your medicines during your stay helps us keep you safe.

## When you are admitted to hospital:

As part of your admission to hospital, one or more members of hospital staff will ask you questions about your medicines. It is very important that we have an accurate and complete list of all the medicines that you use.



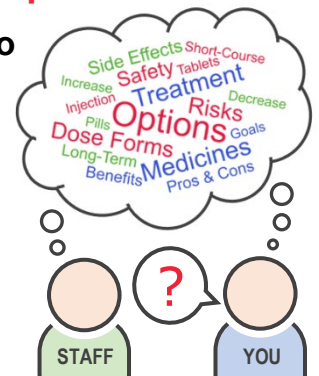
When you are asked about your medicines try to think about the different types of medicines that you might use. Consider tablets, mixtures, creams, inhalers, eye drops, patches, injections, and any other items you can think of. Vitamins and herbal treatments should be included, as well as any medicines you might buy without a prescription or that you use only occasionally. Please let us know if any of your medicines have recently changed and be honest about how well you follow the instructions (including how often you might miss doses).

Hospital staff will need a way to confirm your medicine details, perhaps by going through your medicine boxes and bottles with you, or by asking your permission to speak to your local doctor or pharmacist.

Please do not be concerned if you are asked about your medicines more than once during your stay – often we just need to check that the information we have recorded is correct. If you haven't been asked about what medicines you usually take, or you suspect that the medicines we are giving you aren't quite right, please alert one of our doctors, nurses or pharmacists.

## During your stay in hospital:

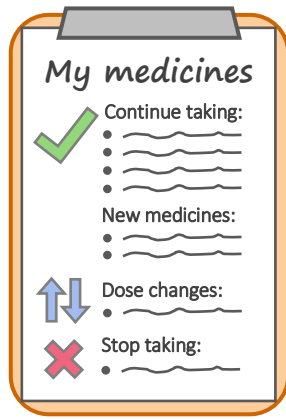
We may make changes to the medicines you take. Your hospital doctors should always include you in these decisions and provide you with information about your treatment options.



Our hospital staff can get very busy at times, but we don't want important conversations about your medicines to get missed. You can help us by asking lots of questions about your medicines, including what the plan is for these medicines after you leave hospital. If you'd like written information about a particular medicine, please ask for a CMI (Consumer Medicines Information). Your ward may also have a pharmacist that you can ask to speak to.

## Before you leave the hospital:

When you are leaving hospital you should be given a clear explanation of any changes that have been made to your medicines. Most patients should also be provided with an updated list of medicines in a format they can understand.



If you do not receive information about your medicines at the time of discharge, or you are unsure about how to take your medicines when you leave hospital, please let a member of staff know immediately.

## Managing your medicines at home:

It is important to us that our patients feel confident in managing their medicines after they leave hospital. One of the best ways to check your confidence is to think about each medicine and ask the following questions:

- ▶ Do I know the name of this medicine?
- ▶ Do I know what strength I use?
- ▶ Do I know what dose I take and when?
- ▶ Do I know what I am using it for?
- ▶ Do I know how long I am going to be on this medicine?
- ▶ Do I know if this medicine has side effects?

If you need help with some of these questions, you can ask to speak to a doctor, nurse or pharmacist. If you have already left hospital, you can ask your local doctor or community pharmacist. You can also call 1300 MEDICINE (1300 633 424) for general information about any medicines (available Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm).

**Keeping an up-to-date list of medicines is one of the BEST things a person can do to stay safe with their medicines.**

Think about how many different health professionals you interact with – local doctors (GPs), specialist doctors, hospital doctors, pharmacists, dentists, paramedics, and other care providers. All of these people need to know what medicines you currently take in order to help you make good and safe decisions about your care.

Patients should always keep an up-to-date list of their medicines. A basic list would include the name, strength and dosage instructions for each medicine, and the date that your list was last reviewed. It's a good idea to also include why you are taking each medicine, when you started it, and for how long you are supposed to take it.

## The MedicineWise App

If you (or your carer) have a smart phone or tablet device, we strongly recommend using the MedicineWise app to help you keep track of medicines and other health information. It is very easy to add medicines to your list and you can set reminders for when your doses are due. You can even email a copy of your medicine list to yourself, your family, and your health professionals.



The MedicineWise app is completely FREE and contains no advertising. It may be downloaded from Google Play or the App Store (ask a friend if you need help with setting this up!)