

Using your prescription medicines safely

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Aim of information

The purpose of this leaflet is to explain what you need to do to ensure that you stay safe when using prescription medicines.

Tell anyone who is prescribing for you if you have any allergies or if you have previously had any medicine that has made you unwell.

Make sure that anyone who prescribes for you knows what medicines you are already taking.

Read the instructions that the pharmacist has printed on the box or bottle: always take them at the right time and in the right way. Do not use medicines after the expiry date marked on the packaging.

Keep your medicines in their original container or correctly placed into your tablet organiser if you have one. Always store your medicines safely, out of the sight and reach of children and vulnerable adults, and in a cool place. Some medicines need to be stored in a refrigerator: this will be clearly marked on the container.

If you are worried about taking the medicines for any reason at all, discuss your concerns with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist before starting to take them.

If you develop side effects, inform your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. Many side effects are mild or will wear off, but in *rare* cases they can be potentially serious: acting promptly will reduce any risk to you.

Never take medicines that have been prescribed for someone else, and never give your own medicines to someone else to use.

See whether your medicines are making you feel better or worse. If you feel worse or feel that they are having no effect, tell your doctor, nurse or pharmacist as soon as possible. If you stop taking the medicine for any reason, inform your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. They will need to know why you have stopped it, and you may be advised to start a different medicine.

Sometimes medicines should not be stopped abruptly: if you have been on a medicine for longer than a month and you want to stop it, discuss how to do this safely with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. It may be that you should have a reduced dose for a while before you completely stop.

If you do not finish the whole batch of a prescription medicine, return the unused medicines to a community pharmacy: do not store them for use later, throw them away with your general waste, or give them to anyone else.

If you have any questions about your prescription medicines, please discuss these concerns with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.