



## Medicines

Medicines include those prescribed by a doctor and those bought from a pharmacy, supermarket or health food store. They also include natural or complementary products. Taking certain types of medicines, or a combination of medicines, can have side effects that can make you dizzy or drowsy which can increase your risk of falls.

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**Manage your medicines safely and effectively and have them reviewed annually.**

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### Do you know enough about your medicines and any possible side effects?

Q I take medications that can affect mental alertness or cause dizziness or drowsiness Yes  No

A If you answered 'Yes'

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about the type and quantity of your medicines and regularly ask them to review your medicines. This is especially important if you are experiencing side effects of medicines, feel at all unsteady on your feet, or if you have fallen over recently.

Consider talking with your doctor about alternative remedies to help you get a good night's sleep. Some people get more sensitive to sleeping tablets as they get older and so experience more side effects from these medicines. These side effects can include confusion and unsteadiness which can increase the risk of falling.

Q I have trouble remembering all of my medicines and what they are for Yes  No

A If you answered 'Yes'

Keep a list of ALL your medicines, even ones that you have purchased at the supermarket, from a health food shop or any other 'natural' medicines you may be taking at the moment. Your doctor or pharmacist can print a list of your prescribed medications which includes the strength, dose and directions for these medicines. Take this list to any appointments with doctors or other health professionals.

Q I forget to take my prescribed medicine correctly eg. at the right time of day, with or without food Yes  No

A If you answered 'Yes'

Talk to your pharmacist if you are unsure about your medicines or if you are unsure if you are taking them correctly – this may help limit any side effects.

### Do you store your medicines correctly?

Q I tend to remove my medicines from their original containers Yes  No

A If you answered 'Yes'

To make sure you are taking your medicines correctly, leave them all in their original containers, or have them packed into a medicines organiser such as a webster pack or dosette box.

### Do you have your medicines reviewed regularly?

Q During a doctor's appointment, there never seems enough time to discuss all my medicines with my doctor (including things that are not prescribed, like vitamins) Yes  No

A If you answered 'Yes'

It can be useful to make an appointment with your doctor just to review all your medicines, vitamins, herbals and non-prescribed medicines. It would be helpful to either bring all your medicines with you or take your up-to-date list of medicines to this appointment.

Q I have not had my medication reviewed in the last 12 months Yes  No

A If you answered 'Yes'

To make sure you are receiving the most up to date treatment, and to avoid taking any unnecessary medicines, have your doctor review your medicines once a year. This is important as your health conditions can change, different medicines may come onto the market, and new research about treatments may become available.

## Tips to help with managing medicines so they are safe and effective

- › Make an appointment to see your doctor if you:
  - › take medicines that affect mental alertness or cause dizziness or drowsiness
  - › have fallen over in the last 12 months
  - › feel at all unsteady on your feet
  - › have concerns about falling.
- › Have your medicines checked
  - › Ask your doctor or pharmacist to arrange a Home Medicines Review. This means a specially trained pharmacist visits you at home to discuss and review all your medicines. You will not have to pay for this service. If this service is not available in your area, contact the Medicines Line.
  - › Some side effects from your medicines can increase your risk of falling. If a medicine makes you dizzy, unsteady or drowsy, check with your doctor if there is a different medicine that is just as effective but without those side effects.
- › Seek further information
  - › Most medicines have consumer information on the label or in the packet. You can also ask your pharmacist for a copy of the Consumer Medication Information (CMI) leaflet, which contains easy to understand information about each of your medicines.
- › Check the label on your medicines – there may be a warning that the medicine may cause dizziness or that it should not be taken with alcohol.
- › Do not use other people's medicine.
- › Check the tools and tips for consumers on the NPS Medicinewise website (further details available on page 38).

## Who can help?

- › Doctor
- › Pharmacist
- › NPS Medicinewise (further information available on page 38).

I plan to take action by ...

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