

What can you do...

Tell us about your medicines

Your team should ask you what medicines you normally take – this is called a medication history. This is important so that your team can work out what medicines you need to take in hospital.

Ask questions about your medicines

Asking questions helps you get the details you need to make better informed decisions. Sometimes having a family member or friend around can help when there is a lot of information.

Know it's a medicine

Herbal medicines, vitamins and other remedies you can buy from supermarkets and pharmacies can affect the medicines you are prescribed. By letting the team know if you take any of these, they can make sure all your medicines work well together.

Know the active ingredient

Each of your medicines has an active ingredient name. For each active ingredient there may be many brand names that mean the same thing (Paracetamol is the active ingredient in brands e.g. Panadol and Panamax). If you know the active ingredient name it can help to make sure you don't double up on two of the same medicines by accident.

Know how to take your medicines

If you normally take your medicines in a different way to how the team is giving them to you in hospital, speak up.

Keep track of all your medicines

Have a list of your medicines. This list should say how and when you take them. Bring the list with you when you go to hospital. If you don't have a list and would like one, ask your team for one.

What is a medication error?

Medication errors are mistakes in prescribing, dispensing and giving medicines. Even though you and the people involved in your care try their best to get it right all the time these errors can still happen. Learning about your medicines will help you to be an active member of your team.



Your medicines in hospital

Let's get it right together



How you can take an active role
in medication safety while
you're in hospital.

Getting it right together...

The people who are caring for you in hospital are trained to follow a checklist to give you your medicines safely. This checklist is sometimes called the 'Rights' and includes the right patient, drug, dose, route, time and the right to refuse.

You are an important member of the team. While you are in hospital you are encouraged to be part of the process of getting your medicines right.

It is important that you feel you can speak up if anything doesn't make sense when you are given a medicine.

This leaflet will give you some examples on how you can be involved.



The right patient

Before you are given any medicine, you will be asked your full name, date of birth AND if you have any allergies or past reactions.

Speak up right away if these checks are missed.



The right drug

Sometimes medicines look different in hospital. If you are asked to take a medicine which you don't know or recognise — ask what it is and what it is for.



The right dose

If you are asked to take 4 or more tablets of a medicine at a time — ask staff to check the dose.



The right route

Medicines can be given by different ways, called 'routes'. Sometimes medicines you usually take by mouth might be given in a different way. If you are unsure how your medicines are being given to you, please ask.



The right time

If you know you have an important medicine that must be taken at a specific time — then speak up.



The right to refuse

You can refuse to take a medicine.*
If you do, it is important to discuss this with your team.

*Exceptions: various provisions of the Mental Health Act 2016 as well as S63 of the Guardianship and Administration Act 2000.