

Medicines

Information for residents, families and carers



People living in aged care homes often take many medicines.

Medicines are useful for treating illnesses. However, they may also interact with each other, cause side-effects, or no longer be needed.

It is important to have regular reviews of your medicines.

Your doctor, pharmacist and nursing staff will make sure you are given the right dose and combination of medicines.

This will help you to get the best from your medicines with the least side effects.

Side effects from medicines

Medicines can cause many different side effects. Ask your doctor, pharmacist or nursing staff if your medicines could be making you unwell.

This can happen when you start to take new medicines, but side effects can also arise with medicines you have been taking for a long time.

Ways to prevent problems caused by taking many medicines

- Talk to the doctor, pharmacist and staff about your medicines.
- Let them know if you have had problems with medicines in the past.
- Ask for a medicines review when you first move into an aged care home.
- Ask to be told if your medicines are changed.
- When you start using a new medicine, the doctor will tell you:
 - what it is for and give you a written information sheet
 - the benefits and possible side effects of the medicine
 - if your new medicine may react with any others you are taking.
- Tell your doctor, pharmacist or staff if:
 - your medicines make you feel unwell.
 - you are taking other medicines like vitamins and herbs which can have side effects and interact with other medicines.
- Let staff know if you think you have been given the wrong medicines.

Working together

You and your family are important members of the care team. You know what is normal for you.

Let staff know if you notice any changes to your health or feel unwell, especially if you have had recent changes to your medicines.

If your health changes, you may need to have changes to your medicines. This is a normal part of your care. Don't wait to see if you get better – it's always best to get help early.

Working together with staff will help keep you healthy and out of hospital. Talk to staff and ask questions. They need your help to give you the best care.

Questions to ask staff

- What are my medicines for?
- What are the benefits and possible side effects of my medicines?
- Can I stop taking any of my medicines?
- Do I need a residential medication management review?
(This is a free medicines check for all people living in residential aged care).



Want to know more?

'Older people and medicines' information <www.nps.org.au>

Disclaimer: This health information is for general purposes only. Please consult with your doctor or other health professional to make sure this information is right for you.

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