

Resources to help manage your medicines

Understanding medicines

- Talk to your pharmacist or doctor about any aspect of medicines. www.healthdirect.gov.au/getting-the-most-out-of-your-pharmacist
- How to read Consumer Medicine Information sheets www.healthdirect.gov.au/how-to-read-cmis
- **NPS MedicineWise** www.nps.org.au
NPS Medicine Wise is an Australian Government source of trusted, up-to-date information on medicines. For example:
 - find information on your medicine listed under brand name or active ingredient
 - read or watch educational tutorials explaining medicines and treatment that involve medicines
 - contact a pharmacist with your questions
- **Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA)** www.tga.gov.au
TGA – the Therapeutic Goods Administration is the body that regulates medicines in Australia, making sure they are safe and effective (if taken the right way). They have up to date information on medicines.

Finding a pharmacy that suits you

Every pharmacy in Australia is listed at www.findapharmacy.com.au. You can view their services and often book in online for vaccinations.

Keeping track of medicines

- **NPS MedicineWise app** www.nps.org.au/medicinewiseapp
A smart phone app that will help you keep track of your medicines and access important health information anytime and anywhere, especially in emergencies.
- **Webster-Paks** www.webstercare.com.au/product/webster-pak-community/
Blister packs are a way the pharmacist can give you medicines so it's easy to take them on the right day and at the right time. They will range in price for the

pharmacist to make them up. You can shop around to find one to suit your budget.

Questions to ask your health professional

- You can ask your doctor or pharmacist questions about things like side-effects or what might happen if you don't take your medicines.
- [Questions to ask before taking a medicine | healthdirect](#)
- **Healthdirect Question Builder** www.healthdirect.gov.au/question-builder
Prepare for your medical appointment by creating a list of questions to ask your doctor, including questions about medicines. Print or email the list so that it is handy to take to your appointment. This preparation will help you get more out of the time with your doctor and help you to remember everything you want to ask.

People you can talk to about medicines

- **Start with your doctor or pharmacist.** Pharmacists have four or more years of study of medicines and know how to help you take your medicines safely and effectively.
- **healthdirect Australia** www.healthdirect.gov.au This Australian government service gives you access to a nurse over the phone who can help with medicines and health information. You can access their help at any time, 24-hours a day. Phone: 1800 022 222.
- **NPS MedicineWise** www.nps.org.au Speak to a health professional for independent information on medicines, eg dosage, side effects, interactions. Phone: 1300 633 424.

The Cost of Medicines

- **Ask your pharmacist**
 - **for generic medicines.** These medicines are cheaper than the brand name medicines but are as effective and safe.
 - **if there is way of taking your medicines that may reduce the cost.** Some medicines can be taken in larger doses or by different routes (e.g. injection compared to tablet). Costs can vary
 - **for a review of your medicines.** You might not need to take all your medicines anymore. Ask for a review (see below).
 - **about the PBS Safety Net:** Ask your pharmacist about the PBS Safety Net – once you've spent a certain amount on medicines, you may be entitled to cheaper medicines. You'll be given a card to prove you can buy your medicines more cheaply.
- **Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS)** www.pbs.gov.au
Information on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme including details of the

medicines subsidised by the Australian Government as well as information for consumers, carers, health professionals and the pharmaceutical industry.

- **Some community services will help** with medicines costs. Contact your local service to find out if this is something they do.

Review of Medicines

- A pharmacist can review your medicines at home or in the pharmacy (MedsCheck) if you take over five medicines. Talk to your local pharmacist.
- Home medicines reviews on Healthdirect: www.healthdirect.gov.au/home-medicines-review

Return unwanted medicines

- Take your unwanted medicines into your pharmacy for collection and disposal. If you want to find out more go to returnmed.com.au

Reporting problems with your medicines

Report problems to your doctor or pharmacist but also to:

- Call the AME Line if you suspect that a medicine is causing a problem and you're worried about using it. The AME Line provides independent, accurate and evidence-based information. You will speak with a pharmacist who will lodge your report and can provide advice on how to manage the side effect. This service is for medicines only.

Phone: **1300 134 237** 8am-8pm Monday to Sunday.

Visit www.nps.org.au/adverse-medicine-events-line for more information.

- Visit this page to learn more about reporting a problem or side effect: www.tga.gov.au/reporting-problems

Buying medicines online

- The Internet can offer a convenient way to buy medicines or medical devices, but online purchases should be done with caution. If you get products or devices from overseas, they may not be regulated which means they may not be safe. Talk to your health professional about options that could suit you that are available in Australia. Learn more at www.tga.gov.au/buying-medicines-and-medical-devices-online

Travelling with your medicines

Services Australia has advice on how to manage your PBS medicine overseas:

<https://www.servicessaustralia.gov.au/how-to-manage-your-pbs-medicine-overseas>

Before you travel you should do all of these:

- Check with the country's embassy, high commission, or consulate if the medicine is legal there
- If it's legal in the country, get a letter from an Australian doctor for the medicine and take it with you. If you can't do this, print and fill in the **Medicine Export Declaration form**: <https://www.servicessaustralia.gov.au/pb302>. Take it with you when you go through customs.
- Leave the medicine in the original packaging.

Electronic Prescriptions Information

- An electronic prescription is a digital version of a paper prescription. During your consultation, your healthcare provider can send your electronic prescription to you as an SMS or email. They will also send it to the pharmacy. Learn more at www.digitalhealth.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/electronic-prescriptions

Canberra Health Literacy Network

This is a new website for community workers, health professionals and consumers. You will find links to the good questions to ask health professionals to manage your health as well as other key health information sources. Go to cbrhl.org.au