

know your medicines

IF YOU or someone you care for is taking medicines, it is important to have the right information. Modern medicines are safe and effective. But to get the most out of your medicines you need to know how to use them – and, where appropriate – how to choose them. But where do you go to get the facts and advice you need? Some people turn to friends and neighbours, to books and magazines and, increasingly, the Internet. But for expert advice near where you live, shop or work, ask your local pharmacist.

ASK AN EXPERT

Pharmacists are experts in medicines and can help you to make the right choices. They are highly trained in all aspects of medicines and their professional code ensures that any information you share remains confidential. This expert knowledge can help you understand more about your medicines so that you can use them safely and effectively.

MEDICINES MATTER

To protect the public, all medicines must be tested and officially authorised to make sure that they are safe and produced to a quality standard.

There are different types of medicines. Some are only available on prescription, others are only available from pharmacies and there are a small number that can be bought from other retail outlets. To be sure that you get the best product and advice for your needs ask your pharmacist, the expert on medicines.

EVERYDAY HEALTH

Your pharmacist can supply medicines for a range of minor problems and can advise you about the best way of treating problems such as coughs and colds, sprains and bruises, headlice, cold sores and skin problems. To get the best advice, explain how long you have had the problem and how it makes you feel. Give the names and dosages of any other medicines you are taking and don't forget to mention any herbal or other complementary remedies.

If you don't feel comfortable about discussing your health at the pharmacy counter, you can speak to the pharmacist in a quiet area away from other customers.

GETTING THE MOST FROM YOUR MEDICINES

Always read the instructions on the label or in the leaflet. If you are unsure about how to take your medicines then ask your pharmacist.

Medicines work in different ways.

- Some are taken before you eat so they get into your system quickly.
- Some need to be taken on their own as they don't work properly if taken with certain foods, herbal preparations or other medicines.
- Some are taken with or after food because there is a chance that they could otherwise irritate your stomach.

Together, you and your pharmacist can work out how best to choose and take your medicine so that it fits in with your daily routine.



THINK MEDICINES SAFETY

All medicines can cause side effects. When you read, for example, that a medicine *may cause drowsiness*, you should avoid situations where you need to be alert such as driving a car or operating machinery.

If you experience any worrying reactions that you think may be a result of your medicine, be sure to talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

We are all different and a medicine that works for one person may not be suitable for another.

If you are prescribed a course of antibiotics, you may start to feel better after just a day or two. However, it is important to continue taking the antibiotics until the course is finished to ensure that any infection is completely cleared.

Medicines should always be locked away from children. In storing your medicines, make sure they are kept away from heat, light and moisture.

For further information about medicines and their use, visit your local pharmacy. The Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (RPSGB) is the regulatory and professional body for pharmacists in England, Scotland and Wales.

The RPSGB is an active partner in the national Ask About Medicines Week campaign.



Published by the
Royal Pharmaceutical
Society of Great Britain
telephone 020 7735 9141
www.rpsgb.org.uk
enquiries@rpsgb.org.uk

Published September 2003

know your medicines



Royal
Pharmaceutical
Society
of Great Britain