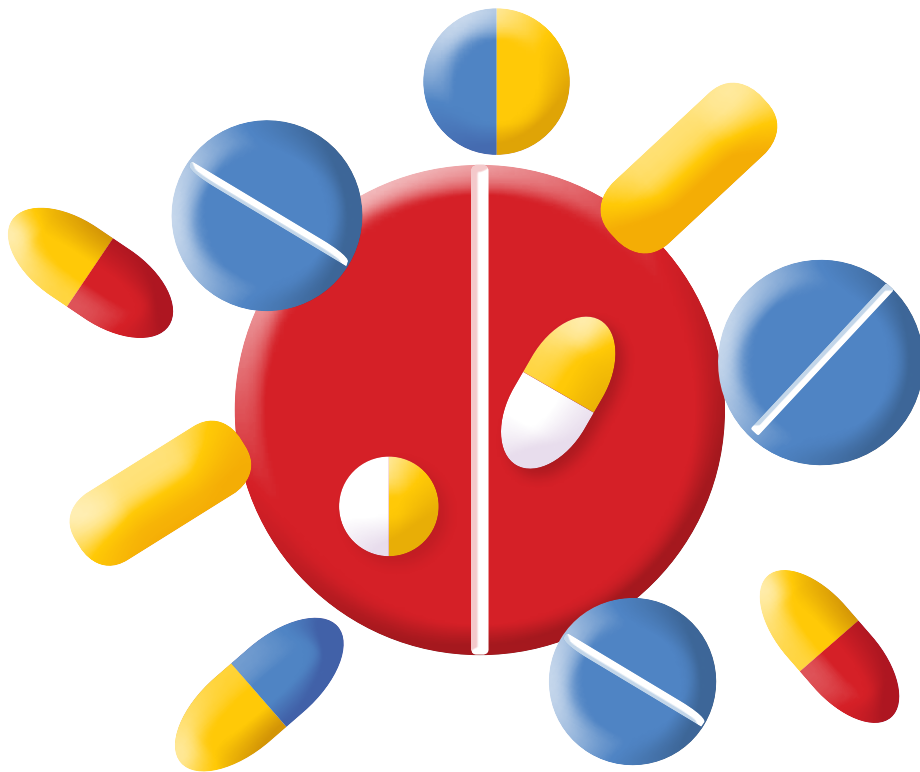




*Resthaven*  
Incorporated

# Guide to using your Medicine Safely



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- Paula Bennett Resthaven Project Officer, Safe Medication Use in Community
- Sue Edwards Southern Adelaide-Fleurieu-Kangaroo Island Medicare Local Pharmacy Advisor
- Sue McKechnie Resthaven Executive Manager Community Services
- Lynn Openshaw Resthaven Manager Service Development
- Leonie Robson Resthaven Senior Manager Clinical Services
- Leanne Lawrence Resthaven Project Officer, Clinical Services
- Nicola Neutze Resthaven Incorporated - Graphic design and photography

**Resthaven Community Service teams:**

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# M E D S



This guide aims to assist you to use your medicines safely, or to help you care for someone who needs you to assist them to take their medicines.

Medicine is anything you swallow, inhale, or put on your skin to treat, manage or prevent health issues.

This guide contains ideas that may help you to use your medicine safely and independently.

Use the M E D S acronym to develop your knowledge and skill. This may help you to get the most from your medicines.



**M = Make a list**



**E = Empower yourself**



**D = Do and don't**



**S = Seek advice**



# Make a list

## Make a list

Keeping a list is a great way to become familiar with your medicine. An up-to date list of the medicines you take can be shared with health practitioners and others who may use the list to guide and review your treatments.

Ask yourself these key questions when making your list.

- Why do I take this medicine?
- How much should I take and when should I take it?
- How long should I take it?
- Are there special instructions?

You may need to ask your pharmacist or doctor to find the answers to these key questions.

## Get started on your list

Include medicated creams, inhalers, eye drops and tablets on your list.

Here are a few ideas that may help to get you started:

- Check your prescriptions, the back of your pharmacy pack, or your medicine box/bottle for the names of your medicines.
- Simply write a list and keep it handy.
- Consider using the *Emergency Medical Information Book*, available from the SA Ambulance Service, and attach it to the fridge. Phone **(08) 8264 2117**.
- Create an electronic list on your computer.  
*NPS Medicinewise* have a handy template that you may use. It can be printed or accessed from your computer at anytime. Visit [www.nps.org.au](http://www.nps.org.au)
- Download the free *NPS Medicines List Application* to your smart phone from the iTunes store and set reminders to take your medicines.

# Empower yourself



## Have a plan

- Allow yourself time to focus and plan ways to use your medicine safely.
- Understand your medicine.
- Think about ways of organising your medicines.
- Try using devices and gadgets to help you take your medicines safely and easily.

## Understand your medicines

Your pharmacist may offer you a generic medicine with a different name to your prescription. This can lead to confusion.

It's important to remember that **medicines** often have two names on the packaging; the **brand name** and the **active ingredient**.

The **active ingredient** is the chemical responsible for the way a medicine works. Different brands will have the same **active ingredient** but they may have different packaging or be a different shape and colour.

Knowing the **active ingredient** of your medicine allows you to compare different brands and make a more informed purchase.

Original brand



◀ Same active ingredient ▶

Generic brand



# Empower yourself

## Organise your medicines

Ask your pharmacist about packing your medicines in a weekly *Webster-pak*, or *Medisache*, or you can pack them yourself in a weekly pill sorter.



*Webster-pak*



*Pill sorter*

## Hard getting the tablets out?



A *Pil-Bob* (pictured above) cuts the foil and catches your tablets.



Try a *Pill Punch*. It breaks the seal on your packaged tablets.

# Empower yourself



## Gadgets to help you take your medicine



You may be able to use the *Cut N Crush Tablet Crusher* to crush your tablets.

Some medicine should not be cut, crushed or dissolved.

Always check first with your pharmacist or doctor.



Splitting your tablets with the *Tablet Splitter* (above) means swallowing smaller pieces of the tablet when taking your medicine.



A *Pill Bottle Label Magnifier* may help you to read the small print.



Using the *Nose Cut Out Cup* reduces the need to tilt your head back to swallow tablets.

# Empower yourself

## Use these gadgets to help with your eye drops



The *Opticare Eye Drop Dispenser* allows you to manage your own eye drops.

## Gadgets to help with Inhalers



*Spacers* hold the medicine, giving you time to breathe it all in.



The *Haleraid* helps you to hold and trigger a dose from your inhaler.



# Empower yourself



## Remind yourself to take your medicine

Some alarm devices have magnets and attach to the fridge.



*Tab Timer Reminding Clock*

These gadgets prompt you when it is time to take your medicine.

*Tab Timer Vibrating Watch*



## Two-in-one Alarms and Organisers

These gadgets have space to organise medicines and they have an alarm to remind you when to take your medicine.



*Tab Timer Pill Reminder 37*



*Tab Timer Pill Box Reminder*



*Tab Timer Automated Pill Dispenser*

# Do and don't

## Do

- Read the labels. Information on the labels includes:
  - **a list of ingredients** (*check these to make sure that you are not allergic to them*)
  - **warnings** (*read these carefully, and take notice*)
  - **the expiration date** (*take note of when your medicines expire*)
  - **the directions for use** (*always follow the prescribed directions*)
- ask your doctor about a **Home Medicines Review** (*your doctor can arrange a pharmacist to check and report that your medicines, including prescribed, over the counter medicine and vitamins, can be safely taken together*)
- return unused, unwanted or expired medicines, to the pharmacy for safe disposal
- ask your doctor about side effects or problems that your medicine may cause
- tell your doctor if you feel unwell: it might be a side effect of the medicine.

## Don't

- miss taking your medicines
- share medicines
- take additional doses, even if you think you missed the previous dose
- use a medicine after the expiry date on the bottle
- discard unwanted medicines down the drain
- hesitate to tell your doctor if you feel unwell: it might be a side effect of the medicine.



## Always talk to your doctor or pharmacist about your medicines.

Good questions to ask are;

- Why am I taking this medicine?
- How will I know if it is working?
- When should I expect to see/feel the benefits?
- If I forget to take a medicine, what should I do?
- Should I take this on an empty stomach or with food?
- What side effects should I watch for?
- Is this tablet slow release?

## Use these other resources for additional information about your medicines:

### Medicine Line

**1300 633 424** is available to answer queries about medicines.

### NPS Medicinewise

[www.nps.org.au](http://www.nps.org.au) is an Internet based resource with trustworthy information about how to use your medicines safely.

### Consumer Medicine Information (CMI)

[www.medicines.org.au](http://www.medicines.org.au) is an internet based resource with the most up to date CMI leaflet. A CMI leaflet has information on the safe and effective use of a prescription or pharmacist-only medicine.

# For more Information

## For any queries about the gadgets in this guide:

- Contact the Independent Living Centre  
**1300 885 886**
- Ask your Pharmacist about the products
- Search the Internet using the product name
- Contact Resthaven Community Services  
**1300 13 66 33**
- Contact SA Ambulance  
**(08) 8264 2117**