

# So, You're going into Hospital?

## What you need to know about your medicines:

- Before your admission
- During your hospital stay
- On discharge from hospital

So, you're going into hospital. You can help the hospital staff to maximise the benefits and minimise the risks associated with your medicines. Your hospital doctor, nurse and pharmacist need to know what medicines you are taking and about any recent changes. This includes any over-the-counter medicines that you buy without a prescription.



## BEFORE YOUR ADMISSION Medication List (or MediList)

Ask your community pharmacist or family doctor to update your Medication List. This may be in the form of a print out from the pharmacy's computer or a MediList card, also available from your pharmacy.

Please make sure you have a full list of ALL your medicines, even those bought from supermarkets or health food shops, and including:

- Prescription medicines
- Vitamins and minerals
- Over-the-counter medicines
- Natural or herbal remedies (sometimes called complementary medicines)
- Creams or ointments for the skin
- Eye drops and eye ointments
- Inhalers and sprays
- Patches
- Pessaries or suppositories
- Injections

## What to bring to hospital with you

Please bring your updated Medication List and/or all your medicines (in their original labelled containers) to hospital with you.

## When you arrive at the hospital

When you are admitted into hospital, you will be asked what medicines you are taking at this time. It is important to tell the doctor about all of your medicines. Show your updated Medication List and/or give your own medicines to the nurse for safe keeping during your hospital stay.

This helps to make sure that you receive the right medicine, at the right dose, and at the right time, while you are in hospital. It also helps to spot any medicine related problems.

Most hospitals have a pharmacist available to give information about your medicines, and to answer any questions. Ask the ward staff when you are admitted if a pharmacist will be on hand to talk to you about your medicines.

## Allergies/Sensitivities to medicines

You may be allergic or sensitive to some medicines, or you may have experienced an unexpected reaction in the past. If you have had any previous unexpected reactions it is very important to tell the hospital doctor, pharmacist and nurse.

## DURING YOUR HOSPITAL STAY

Hospital pharmacists work in ward areas together with the doctors and nurses. They are able to keep an eye on each patient's medicine and work closely with doctors and nurses to ensure the best choice of medicine, the right dose and length of treatment.

The hospital pharmacist can also provide important advice about possible side effects and interactions with other medicines or food. This advice is particularly important for older people, children, people with a number of medical conditions, or those who take a lot of different medicines.

The hospital doctor may need to change some of the medicines you were taking before you came into hospital and prescribe you some new medicines.

The doctor will usually be on hand to discuss these changes with you. If you would like more information, you can also ask your hospital pharmacist (if available) or nurse to talk you through any changes. Not all hospitals have visiting ward pharmacists, check with your ward staff.

It is important to know that sometimes there may be quite a few different brands of the same medicine. Normally in hospitals, only one or two brands of each medicine are kept.

So, the medicine you receive in hospital could be the same as your usual medicine, but looks different because the hospital keeps a different brand in stock. If you have any queries, please ask your hospital pharmacist, doctor or nurse.

Information leaflets may be offered to help you understand your medicine better and how to take it wisely. At any time, you can ask the nurse to contact the hospital pharmacist, if you would like a leaflet or have other questions.

When you are in hospital, do not take any other medicines without the knowledge of your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

## ON DISCHARGE FROM HOSPITAL

Your hospital pharmacist will discuss your discharge medicines with you to ensure that you know what you will be taking when you go home, how to take your medicines wisely and how to store them safely. Your Medication List can be updated or a new list prepared, as required.

Most hospitals give two to seven day's supply of discharge medicine for you to take home. You will need to see your own doctor soon after discharge to obtain prescriptions for further supplies of your medicine.

## SEE YOUR COMMUNITY PHARMACIST

Follow-up by talking to your community pharmacist soon after you are discharged from hospital. Remember to take with you the Medication List prepared at the time of your discharge. Your community pharmacist will update your computer patient records to show any medicine changes you have had in hospital and advise you about prescription repeats you may have at home. Check with your community pharmacist if you are unsure about any of your medicines, or you can even phone the hospital pharmacy.



Medicines taken in the wrong way can cause harm. Regular medication reviews are needed to check whether the medicine is still needed, if it is the right dose for you and whether changes in your body suggest a change is needed in your medicine.

Your family doctor and community pharmacist will help you to manage your medicines in the most beneficial way.

## CHECKLIST (prior to discharge)

- Medication List (or MediList) – to be updated or start a new Medication List if you have not previously had one.
- Medicines - ensure you have sufficient supply
- Discharge letter for your family doctor
- Dressings or bandages you may need
- Appointment cards for any follow-up visits

### Remember to be wise with medicines

Your doctor and pharmacist are on hand to discuss your medicines and your health.

Some common questions are:

- What is the medicine supposed to do?
- How do I take it?
- How long do I keep taking it?
- Are there foods, drinks or other medicines that I should avoid?
- What if I miss a dose?
- Are there any side effects and what should I do if they occur?

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Your Pharmacist

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