

**Managing Medication Guidance:**

**to assist healthcare professional**

**to assess patients experiencing medication**

**compliance problems**

# Index

	Page
Introduction and background.....	1
Managing Medication .....	2
• Medication review .....	3
• Dexterity .....	3
• Memory .....	3
• Visual impairment .....	4
Medication Aids .....	5
Appendix 1      Examples of Medication Reminder Chart	
Word template .....	8
Pharmacy System .....	9
Appendix 2      Example of MAR sheet .....	10
Appendix 3      Compliance Assessment	
Pharmacist Guidance - Compliance Self Assessment Form .....	11
Self Assessment form .....	13
Medication Assessment Tool .....	14
Appendix 4      Managing your medication leaflet .....	17

## **Introduction**

This Guidance is designed to

1. Provide community pharmacists with the appropriate tools to enable patients to manage their medication while maintaining patient autonomy and encouraging compliance with medication.
2. Increase awareness amongst health and social care staff, as well as patients and carers, of the range of aids to support patient compliance with prescribed therapy.

The Guidance supports:

1. The NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde Long Term Conditions Framework to improve the health and wellbeing of people with long term conditions (LTC); to keep people as healthy as possible for as long as possible reducing the impact of long term conditions.
2. The NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Rehabilitation and Enablement Framework and the introduction of a comprehensive assessment, rehabilitation and care management delivery model to meet the needs of; older people, older people with mental illness and adults with a physical disability.
3. The Prescribing Savings Plan to reduce the waste associated with medicine through non compliance and monitored dosage systems (MDS).
4. The NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde 'Accessible Information Group' report on current status and future priorities across PPSU in relation to 'Patient access to information about medicines'.

## **Background**

The guidance has been developed following the report on the "Access to Medicines: Compliance Aids" in NHS GGC (Feb 2009) and the roll out of the Managed Medication Service delivered by Cordia in Glasgow City.

The "Access to Medicines: Compliance Aids" report highlights the current difficulties experienced across all sectors of Glasgow City health and social care provision on access to and the appropriate use of monitored dosage systems/MDS to support patient compliance with prescribed therapy. These difficulties are similarly reflected in areas outwith Glasgow city.

Considerable reliance is placed on the use of monitored dosage systems (MDS) by medical and social care staff, patients, carers and pharmacists as a tool to support patients who find it difficult for whatever reason to comply with prescription medicines. This has resulted in limited capacity within many community pharmacies to accommodate new patients on a MDS.

Recognising that an MDS is not a panacea for all non compliance, the report further describes some of the limitations and risks associated with compliance aids including the noticeable level of reported dispensing errors and critical incidents involving medicines associated with them. This is in addition to the deskilling of patients; to understand the need and use of their medication which detracts from their ability to self manage their condition through the use of a MDS.

## Managing Medication Guidance

The Care Inspectorate have also briefed on the misconception among providers that care staff should only administer medication from a compliance aid because it is the safest method. They advise that a compliance aid is simply a convenient form of repackaging for a limited range of medicines and staff should be aware of the associated risks and benefits. Further advice to the care provider includes the recommendation that staff training in the administration of all medicines from pharmacy labelled containers would be a more appropriate course of action.

The Managed Medication service delivered by Cordia in Glasgow City recognises the limitations and risks care staff are exposed to as a result of administering medication from a MDS. Consequently, care staff are trained in the administration of medicines from pharmacy labelled containers and record details using standard documentation. The service allows trained carers to administer medication to their clients who lack the physical or mental capacity to do this effectively themselves. The service supports vulnerable adults to manage their medication in the community.

One of the major benefits is that care staff are administering medication from a medication chart not those limited to inclusion in an MDS eg inhalers, liquids. Not only does it improve patient safety but it keeps staff safe through training and recording what medication has been administered.

## Managing Medication Guidance

The information in this pack is for all healthcare professionals to raise awareness of the wide range of support mechanisms available from community pharmacists that can be of benefit to patients and family or social carers looking for solutions to managing their medication.

Identifying why a patient has problems with their medication should be the first step to considering the most appropriate solution.

Consider the following

1. Medication Review
2. Dexterity
3. Memory
4. Visual Impairment
5. Hearing impairment
6. Literacy problems
7. Language problems
8. Learning disability

The assessment tool (Appendix 3) can help to assist the patient and healthcare professional to identify a possible solution to the problem.

### 1. Medication Review

- a. identify if all treatment is indicated and appropriate
- b. simplify the regime to help compliance if possible
- c. ensure the directions on the label clear
- d. consider reducing the quantity supplied to the patient to help them cope eg weekly dispensing or one months supply

### 2. Dexterity

Large containers	These have a larger lid to improve grip in opening containers where appropriate
Easy open tops	Non child resistant tops can be requested by the patient and agreed with the pharmacist
Winged Caps	Non child resistant tops with a wing attachment
Pill press/ Pill poppet (available to purchase)	Devices that enable medicines to be pushed out of blister packs
Eye drop dispensers	Available on prescription to aid with administration of eye drops
Inhaler aids	Aids to help patients grip, actuate or twist their inhaler device. (Available free directly from manufacturers eg Allen & Hanburys, Astra)

### 3. Memory

Medication Reminder Chart Appendix 1	A paper based chart to summarise medicines, what they are for and when to take them. RPS Good Practice guidance for the production of MAR charts should be adopted for the Medication Reminder Chart. <i>The Reminder Chart is constructed on the basis of <b>the current prescription</b> together with information about repeat prescriptions for PRN medicines.</i>
Medication Tick Charts useful for people who may forget they have taken their medication or need help with a more complex regime Appendix 2	A paper based chart as above but the patient records they have taken their medication. These charts are available on pharmacy computer systems however blank templates are available from the CHCP prescribing team.  Copies of the patient's medication labels can be stuck onto the blank template. The Care Inspectorate have advised this should be overlaid with Selotape to avoid tampering.. Explain to the patient/ carer how to use the chart and advise them initially to bring it back the next month to discuss if they had any problems.


### 4. Visual impairment



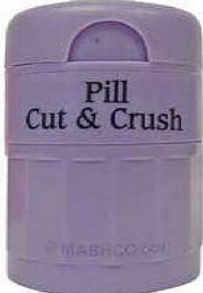

Colour coding	Coloured dots can be stuck on medication to indicate what it is for. A colour coded key must be placed on a separate sheet of paper for them to refer to.
Large print labels	Dependant on dispensary labelling computer Font size 16/18 is classed as large RNIB suggest Arial font no smaller than 14. It may be easier to print clearly on a large piece of paper in large font the regime for taking the medication
Tactile Identifiers	Attach something to the box/foil strip e.g. elastic




Managing Medication Guidance

	band, staples; tear in the lid of the box, in agreement with the patient.
Larger Diagrams/Pictures	Draw/ attach pictures onto the box to signify when a medicine is to be taken e.g. Sun for the morning, Moon for at night
Magnifying Glass	Suitable magnifying glasses recommended by RNIB
Braille	Do not stick dispensing labels over Braille information on medicines
Braille Products	Braille labeller - based on a Dymo gun, prints letters and numbers as Braille characters on to a self adhesive tape which can then be affixed to a carton or bottle. Retails ~£40 There are many professional Braille machines available to purchase and range in cost from approximately £1500 to £10k.
Plastic labels	Basic tie on labels provided as a strip of plastic that can be attached to a container. Can be Brailled or used in conjunction with other labels or a felt pen. Historically, pre-printed Braille versions have also been available from the pharmaceutical industry. These are colour coded with the dosage instructions Brailled on the label which is then tied on to the container
Plastic sheets	Available as sheets of self adhesive plastic that can be embossed using a Braille machine

The following pages list some of the medication aids to support patients with their medication. The list is designed to give an indication of what forms of support are available to patients. The NPA provides a comprehensive list of suppliers. Inclusion in this list does not imply endorsement by NHS GGC. Prices are given as a guide.






	<p><b>Pill Punch</b></p> <p>Handy tablet removal device which comes in 4 sizes. Designed by a Pharmacist to aid removal of most tablets and capsules from blister strips. Helpful for anyone who has difficulty in removing pills from blisters</p> <p>£5.99</p>	<p>AAH &amp; NPA</p>
	<p><b>PillPress</b> is a unique and innovative product that solves the frustrating problem some people experience when removing pills from blister packaging as the enclosed 'well' captures the pill when pushed through the foil pack by hand.</p> <p>£5.99</p>	<p>RNIB</p>

	<p>Grip it bottle opener Internal grip fits the bottle top While the outer surface fits comfortably in your hand Great for removing most bottle tops £3.18</p>	<p>The Disabled Shop</p>
	<p>Plain bottle tops / Winged bottle tops</p>	<p>Local pharm wholesalers</p>
	<p>Pill mate cutter Small, portable plastic pill cutter cuts tablets neatly and simply if they are too large, or are just too difficult to swallow whole £2.98</p>	<p>AAH &amp; NPA</p>
	<p>PillMate pill cut &amp; crush Suitable for those who are unable to or have difficulty swallowing pills £3.76 (minimum of 6)</p>	<p>AAH &amp; NPA</p>
	<p>Opticare Arthro 5 &amp;10 perfect for users that suffer from arthritis or limited hand and shoulder mobility simply place your eye drop bottle into the dispenser and guide the drops into your eye accurately Opticare Arthro 5 is compatible with most round and oval shaped bottles (2.5ml and 5ml) and is blue in colour Opticare Arthro 10 is compatible with most round and oval shaped bottles (10ml and 15ml) and is cream in colour Please Note: This product is not compatible with Xalacom or Travatan eye drops £7.50</p>	<p>Available on prescription</p>

 <p>A blue plastic eye drop dispenser with a white bottle inside, designed to hold and dispense eye drops.</p>	<p>Opticare eye drop dispenser</p> <p>each dispenser is now supplied with a simple adaptor making it compatible with many non-standard bottles can clip on to most round eye-drop bottles from 5-15ml, commonly used by people with glaucoma ideal for people who have arthritic hands or anyone who finds it difficult to dispense eye drops to enquire about getting this product on prescription please quote PIP-code 033-3369 to your Doctor Please Note: This product is compatible with Xalacom or Travatan eye drop bottles, as the dispenser is now supplied with an adaptor</p> <p>£6.50</p>	<p>AAH &amp; NPA</p>
 <p>A white and green voice recorder device attached to a white blister pack labeled 'Tablets'. Several white tablets are scattered on a blue surface in front of it.</p>	<p>The Talking Label voice recorder offers a simple and effective solution if you take multiple medications, as it provides audible guidance when you need to identify and take any medication.</p> <p>£6.94</p>	<p>RNIB</p>
 <p>A purple plastic device with a curved shape and a small opening, designed to hold an eye drop bottle and guide the drop into the eye.</p>	<p>Aid for administering eye drops</p> <p>Eyepiece attaches to dropper bottle ensures correct positioning over eye</p> <p>Simply squeeze bottle to administer drops</p> <p>£3.78</p>	<p>AAH &amp; NPA</p>



**Appendix 1 - Examples Medication Reminder Chart (Word Template)**

Patients Address Label	Medication Reminder Chart							Valid from ___ / ___ / ___ to ___ / ___ / ___
	What is the medicine for?	Description of medicine*	Breakfast 	Lunch Midday 	Afternoon 	Teatime 	Bedtime 	
Medication Label 1								
Medication Label 2								
Medication Label 3								
Medication Label 4								

\* Appearance of your medication may change; if a difference is noticed please discuss this with your pharmacist.

**Examples Medication Reminder Chart – Pharmacy Systems. Similar charts are available on all Pharmacy PMR system**

MEDICATION	DIRECTIONS	08:00	13:00	18:00	22:00			NOTES
ADCAL D3 CHEWABLE Qty: 14	Take one in the morning and one at teatime – <i>to be sucked or chewed</i>	1		1				White Large Round Tabs
ATENOLOL TABS 25MG Qty: 7	Take one in the morning <i>Do not stop taking this medicine except on your doctors advise</i>	1						White Convex Tabs 3U1
ATORVASTATIN TABS 20MG Qty: 7	Take one at bedtime				1			White round Tabs ATV 20
FLUOXETINE CAPS 20MG Qty: 7	Take on in the morning	1						Yellow Green Capsules FLX MIL
FUROSEMIDE TABS 40MG Qty: 7	Take one in the morning	1						White Flat Tabs F40
LANSOPRAZOLE CAPS 30MG Qty: 7	Take one in the morning <i>Swallow whole (don't chew) half to one hour before food. Do not take indigestion remedies at the same time of day</i>	1						White Capsules
PLAVIX TABS 75MG Qty: 7	Take one in the morning	1						Pink Round Tabs 75
RAMIPRIL CAPS 5MG Qty: 7	Take one in the morning	1						Pink/White Capsules 93 7211
TOLTERODINE TABS 2MG Qty: 7	Take one in the morning <i>Warning: May cause drowsiness, if affected do not drive or operate machinery</i>	1						White Round Tabs D T

**Name:**

**DOB:**

**Start Date:**

**Appendix 2** – Example of MAR sheet

SPACE FOR PHARMACY BAG ADDRESS LABEL																													
Medication Details	START DATE #	MONTH																											
	TIME #	DOSE #																											
	BFAS																												
	LUNCH																												
	TEA																												
	BED																												
	BFAS																												
	LUNCH																												
	TEA																												
	BED																												
	BFAS																												
	LUNCH																												
	TEA																												
	BED																												
	BFAS																												
	LUNCH																												
	TEA																												
	BED																												

**Appendix 3**

**Pharmacist Guidance - Compliance Self Assessment Form**

This form can be completed by the patient at home or in the pharmacy, the questions will inform the assessment form which should be used to help identify potential solutions to the patient's medication problems.

*Think about your tablets, capsules, liquids, creams, inhalers and other types of medicines*

<p><b>Do you feel confident about how and when you should take your medication?</b></p>
<p><b>Do you use a system or routine to help you to remember to take your medicines?</b></p> <p>Consider this response when you think about the support you can provide. If patient has a routine that works and is safe, (for example a tick chart) then build upon it with your compliance support.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If yes, how do you remember to take them?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If yes, does this always remind you to take your medicines?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Does anybody help you take your medicines?</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If yes, who usually helps you?                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A relative or friend    <input type="checkbox"/> District nursing service    <input type="checkbox"/> Home care assistant</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other Please specify</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In what way do they help you?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Do you take or use all of your medicines according to the instructions?</b></p> <p>If the patient does not like to follow directions or decides that they want to alter the way that they take medicines, then putting medicines into an MDS may be too restrictive for them.</p>
<p><b>Do you ever change the way that you take your prescribed medicines from the directions?</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If yes, what do you change, and why?</li> </ul> <p>If the answer is 'yes' an MDS would not help. You should adopt a concordant approach to determine the key issues. An MDS may control the regimen too much.</p>

**Do you have any problems with opening or closing medicine containers?**

If they have problems, a change in packaging may be better than an auxiliary aid. Think about non-crc, wing-top containers, blister packaging. Ensure that you assess their ability to USE (taking medicines out of, opening and closing) an auxiliary aid that you provide or that they have purchased in the past.

**Do you have any problems getting medicines out of containers?**

If they have problems, a change in packaging may be better than an auxiliary aid. Think about non-crc, wing-top containers, blister packaging. Ensure that you assess their ability to USE an MDS that you provide.

**Can you take or use all of your medicines (e.g. swallowing, using drops/ inhalers)?**

Is a question that may prompt signposting for an assessment, or refer back to GP.

**Do you think that some of your medicines are more helpful than others?**

If the answer to this is 'yes' then this patient may require a referral for a clinical review. Research has shown that not knowing what your medicines are for does influence compliance.

**Do you know what you take your medicines for?**

Explaining what some of the medicines are for has been shown to improve compliance.

**Could the instructions on your medicines be improved to help you manage them better?**

Consider signposting for an eye test. If an eye test has been conducted recently larger labels, clearer instructions alongside a reminder chart may be all that is required to support compliance.

**Do you think you need help to take your medicines correctly?**

- If yes, what do you think would help you?  
E.g. reminder chart, large print labels, easy open tops, clearer directions  
Why do you think you are unable to take your medicines correctly?

**Do you sometimes forget to take your medicines?**

This may be a key indicator that a tick chart or a MAR will be useful.

### Compliance Self Assessment Form

**Instructions:** This form can be completed in your own home or anywhere that you feel is appropriate. You may ask family members, carers or the pharmacy staff to support you. Complete as much of the form as you can. Fill in the spaces or insert a  next to your answer.

*Think about your tablets, capsules, liquids, creams, inhalers and other types of medicines*

	Yes	No	
<b>Do you feel confident about how and when you should take your medication?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Do you use a system or routine to help you to remember to take your medicines?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If yes, how do you remember to take them?</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If yes, does this always remind you to take your medicines?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Does anybody help you take your medicines?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If yes, who usually helps you?  <input type="checkbox"/> A relative or friend    <input type="checkbox"/> District nursing service    <input type="checkbox"/> Home care assistant  <input type="checkbox"/> Other please specify</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In what way do they help you?</li> </ul>			
	Yes	No	
<b>Do you take or use all of your medicines according to the instructions?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Do you ever change the way that you take your prescribed medicines from the directions?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If yes, what do you change, and why?</li> </ul>			
<b>Do you have any problems with opening or closing medicine containers?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Do you have any problems getting medicines out of containers?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Can you take or use all of your medicines (e.g. swallowing, using drops/inhalers)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Do you think that some of your medicines are more helpful than others?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Do you know what you take your medicines for?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Could the instructions on your medicines be improved to help you manage them better?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Do you think you need help to take your medicines correctly?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If yes, what do you think would help you? eg reminder chart, large print labels, easy open tops, clearer directions</li> <li>Why do you think you are unable to take your medicines correctly?</li> </ul>			
	Often	Sometimes	Never
<b>Do you sometimes forget to take your medicines?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Medication Assessment Tool

Assessed By \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

The following information and the “Compliance Self Assessment” form should help to identify why a patient is having problems with their medication and the most appropriate solution.

### 1. Patient Details

Patient name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2.1 Compliance issues - Coping methods

*Have examples of Reminder Charts /MAR charts to show the patient*

	Currently using	Could be useful	Patient does not think this will help
<b>Simple routine</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Tick chart</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Medication Reminder Chart</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Purchased compliance aid</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Family/friend support</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Monitored Dose System</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 2.2 Patient’s ability to comply or concur with medication

When answering, consider how each factor may affect the patient’s medication management and/or their compliance with their medication regime. Identify possible solutions.

	Problem area		Potential solution
	Yes	No	Practical solution, sign posting or aid
<b>Reading Instructions</b> Able to <u>read</u> labels and directions on medication containers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Understand Instructions</b> Able to <u>understand</u> labels and directions on medication containers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Directions on medicines unclear</b> E.g. “as directed”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Number of prescription medicines</b> Does the patient feel the number of medicines they are taking is causing them a problem?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>The number of PRN prescribed items</b> <i>If a lot of items are taken on PRN basis or are different formulations then a compliance aid may not be appropriate.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Swallowing</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Able to access medicines e.g. pop blisters, use inhalers etc</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>(see page 3)</u>
<b>Lack of understanding of the reason for taking medicine</b> <i>Not knowing what your medicines are for does influence compliance</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Generally forgetful</b> Consider simple routine reminders, reminder chart, tick chart	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>What are the main issues or risks identified, regarding ‘compliance’ issues?</b>			

**3. DAY TO DAY MEDICATION MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

**3.1. Patient’s ability to self administer their medication**

Look at the patient’s medication profile and assess their ability to administer their medication correctly. Ask the patient to demonstrate the relevant abilities from the list below and determine whether they require assistance or whether they can manage alone. Please tick the appropriate column for each question. *Not all tasks will require to be assessed*

Ability	Requires assistance	Can manage alone	Not applicable	Practical solution, sign posting or aid
a) Open and remove a tablet from a blister pack				
b) Pick up a tablet from a table/counter				
c) Break/cut a tablet in half				
d) Open and close a child-resistant container				
e) Open and close a regular (non child-resistant) container				
f) Pour liquid medication from a bottle (5ml spoon or 20ml measure)				
g) Correct use of an inhalation device				
h) Ability to instil eye drops correctly				
i) Ability to instil ear drops correctly				
j) Correct use of nasal drops/spray				
k) Correct administration/application of external preparations				
l) Other abilities/devices ( <i>explain</i> ) .....				

**What are the main issues or risks identified, regarding ‘medication management’ issues?**



**Assessment Summary – identifying risk areas and solution**

Summary of risk areas	Assessed risk level			'Practical solution', sign-posting or aid provided to support compliance
	High	Medium	Low	
Coping routine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Getting medicines out of containers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Swallowing or using medicines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Following instructions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Intentional non-compliance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Confusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sensory problems (e.g. sight)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Physical problems (e.g. tremor)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p><b>For medium and high risk areas, a practical solution should be considered when available and appropriate for the patient.</b></p> <p><b>Please refer to the list of available aids to compliance to help identify suitable support for the patient e.g. medication chart, pill popper etc</b></p>				
<p>Outline of intervention required and agreed with patient</p>				

**How do you manage your medicines?**

- Managing how and when to take your medicine and knowing what they are for can be a problem, especially if you are taking a number of medicines.
- Medicines are often available in patient packs, which make them easier to manage. Patient packs contain an information leaflet which gives you valuable information about your medicine and how to take them. Many of the blister packs will also have days of the week printed on them.
- However, you may still have problems such as remembering when to take your medicines, getting them out of the packaging or reading the labels.

**Trouble remembering to take your medicines?**

- Your pharmacist may be able to suggest ways to help you remember to take your medicines. For example, using a reminder chart will help you take your medicines as part of your day to day routine.
- Sometimes it is possible to change some of your medicines so that it is easier for you to take them. You can talk about this with your doctor or ask your pharmacist.

**Trouble reading the labels?**

- If you have problems reading the size of print on prescription labels, talk to the pharmacy staff about whether they can give you labels with a larger print or help in some other way.

**Trouble handling or removing your medicines from the packaging?**

- You may have trouble getting tablets or capsules out of the containers or blister packs they are supplied in. If this is the case, your pharmacist may be able to help by putting your medicines into bottles with tops which are easy to open.
- Sometimes, the doctor may ask you to take half or quarter of a tablet. If you have trouble cutting or breaking the tablet, the pharmacy may be able to advise you on the best method of doing this.

**Trouble swallowing your medicines?**

- If you have difficulty swallowing medicine, it may be possible to get your medicine supplied as a liquid or as a tablet that dissolves in water, if it is appropriate for you.

- It will help if you take your medicines with plenty of water and always take your medicines standing or sitting as upright as possible.

**Trouble using your inhaler/eye drops?**

- It is sometimes possible to get tools or aids which can help you use medicines such as these. Sometimes, just having someone show you again can do the trick, or in the case of inhalers, you might need to change to a different type. You can discuss this with your pharmacist or doctor.

**Worried about side effects?**

- The information leaflet which comes with your medicines will list possible side effects. Not everyone gets side effects from their medicines but if you are worried please discuss this with your pharmacist or doctor.

**Do I need a medicines organiser?**

- Medicines can be organised in a container, also known as a monitored dosage system (MDS), Dosett box or compliance aid, which has compartments with times and days of the week. These containers may not be right for all patients or for all medicines, ask your pharmacist.

**For example:**

- Some medicines such as liquids and powders may not be suitable for compliance aids, as well as some tablets and capsules, which have to be kept in their original containers to protect them from the moisture in the air which can cause them to become less effective. These medicines will be supplied in a different container which may lead you to forget to take some of your medicines.
- It can be difficult to identify individual medicines in each compartment and you would not normally receive a medicines information leaflets at the time of dispensing. Therefore using a medicines container may make it much harder for you to follow any special instructions and understand what medicines you are taking and why.
- Medicine doses can get mixed up in some types of containers if they are dropped or shaken.
- A container may not be the best way for you to manage your medicines but may be helpful where other solutions will not work.

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**Jesli chaczysz uzyskac te informacje w innym jezyku skontaktuj sie z:**

**Eger bu bilgivi bir baska dilde istiyorsanız lütfen bağlantı kurunuz:**

**اگر آپ یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں حاصل کرنا چاہتے ہیں تو براہ مہربانی رابطہ کریں:**

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**إذا رغبت في الحصول على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال بـ:**

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**0141 211 0307**



## Managing Your Medicines



### A patient's guide to managing medicines

#### What help can I get with my medicines?

Your pharmacist is an expert on medicines and will be able to give you advice on how to manage and understand your medicines and look at ways to help you.