



Better **Medicines**

A Guide to safer Medicine Use for Aboriginal People

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Health Consumers' Council (WA)

with thanks Consumer information, National Prescribing Service.
www.nps.org.au

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What is a medicine?

**A medicine is something that is made to make you better.
Medicines come in many different ways.**



- Tablets come in all sorts of shapes and sizes big round ones, small round ones, long ones and short ones
- You can drink them
- You can breathe them in
- They come in drops
- Patches to put on your skin
- Creams or lotions to put on your skin too
- Some medicines you might need to put in your bottom (bum)

**Some medicines you put in your mouth
Other ones you put them on
your body**



- Herbal medicines
- Vitamins
- Minerals
- Nutritional Supplements



Are like bush Medicines!



Lot of our mob don't know that!



What does a medicine do for you?

Medicines do lots of different things for your body



They will help you get better when you are sick or when you hurt yourself.



Some medicines are to stop you from getting really sick.



Where do I get Medicines from?

You can get them from the chemist with the papers from the doctor or the dentist



You can get other medicines from the chemist too.

You can get medicines from the

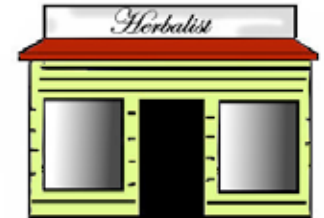
SUPERMARKETS



HEALTH FOOD SHOPS



HERBAL SHOPS



and you can get them off the computer



What you need to know when taking your medicine?

If you are taking more than one (1) medicine you should think of two (2) important things



1. That medicine you already taking might not mix with them new ones.

2. You should tell the doctor at the AMS or the mob at the chemist. They can help you if you tell them what medicines you already got.



**This might be free medicines that you get at the chemist or at the shop?
The other way is from the doctor who might prescribe a new one for you.**

You also need to know about the other medicines you are taking just in case you have a problem with them



The mob at the chemist or the AMS will want to know about them too.

You might need to write them down for them to look at even the ones you take for a little while too.



Some of these medicines don't work so good with your feed or beer - it might make you feel no good.

When a woman is pregnant some medicines might be no good for her too.



Go see the mob at the AMS if you don't know about the medicines.

Ask questions
It's your
RIGHT!



Use the computer to find good health information?



The computer is full of information some of it might be good and some might be no good

if you don't have a computer you can always ask the mob at the AMS if you can use their computer.

Who made the website? CHECK IT OUT

- Can you read it properly?
- Did they say that they are a doctor?
- Is it clear from the mob who wrote it?
- Did they tell you who made it?
- Can I ring them mob if I want to ask questions?



Has the website got a lot of information?

For a lot of disease

- The website might tell you what caused the problem in the first place
- How can you stop the problem from happening again.

The doctor at the AMS will tell you how the problem happened and what sort of help you might need to live a healthy life.

They can tell you how to live a good healthy life and what treatment is not working for you



Your doctor at the AMS can tell you what is good for you and what is no good for you. They can also tell what will happen to you if you don't take the medicines.

Is the information on the website up to date?

- Be careful of old information
- Check the latest information
- Check the date of the information



Is the website easy for me?

- Is the language too hard for me to understand?
- Can I read it clearly?

Does the website tell me a lot about Health?

- Health comes in many different ways it can also be different for a lot of people
- You might need some money to pay for your health
- Does it tell you about what you can do if you don't want that treatment?
- Is it telling me about everything I need to know about this health issue?

Privacy (My private information)?

If the website is asking for your private information, does it tell you what it wants the information for?



- Are there rules for them wanting my private information and can I see them?
- Do I have to be a member to use the website and is my private information going to be safe from everyone else?

To get computer information?

You might need to print off some of the information for the mob at

- The chemist or doctor at the AMS to read for you and tell you what it means.
- You can also go to the Australian Government website
- www.healthinsite.gov.au
- www.chf.org.au for the Consumer Health forum.
- or email info@hconc.org.au



Remembering **your medicines?**

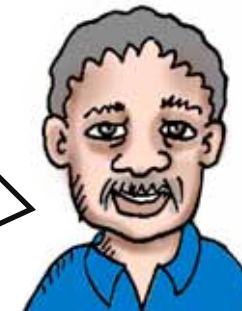
Remember to take your medicine at the same time everyday



Remember to take it with you every time you visit the doctor at the AMS or the chemist or even when you go to the Hospital so they can check it for you.

You can get a Medicine List from the chemist or you can call this number 1300 888 763 for more information.

This list is a VERY GOOD THING to have!



You should make a list of all your medicines

- You need to write down all the medicines you are taking
- Is it a strong medicine?
- What the medicine is for
- How much medicine you have to have
- When you started having the medicine
- When you stopped taking the medicine
- What colour tablet you need to take in the morning and what colour tablet you need to take in the evening.

You might need to talk to doctor at the AMS or the mob at the chemist and let them know you stopped taking the medicine.

You can put the list of medicines that you are taking on

THE FRIDGE



IN THE DRAWER NEXT TO YOU BED



PUT IT IN YOUR BAG OR YOUR PURSE OR WALLET



Getting into a routine?

You must remember to take you medicine all the time and at the same time everyday



At breakfast time



Sometimes at lunch



Or at tea time



One good way to remember to take your medicine is after you go toilet in the morning or after you had a shower in the morning.



Also remember that some medicines might need to be taken after you had a feed.

Keep all your medicines together?

Put all your medicines together in one spot, that way you know where they are when you need them.

Some people might have a web-ster pack to tell them that they need to take their medicines all week.

The doctor at the AMS or the chemist can make it up for you if need one.



Use a reminder

You might need one of your relations who live with you to tell you when you need to take your medicine



What to do if you miss out on taking your medicine?

Ask the doctor at the AMS or the mob at the chemist what you need to do if you forgot to have your medicine.



You get medicines for all sorts of reasons. They can make you feel better, and to stop you from getting sick. Doesn't matter what reason it's good to know what all the medicines are.

Always talk to the doctor at the AMS or the mob at the chemist and tell them about how you feel so you don't get too sick.



Tell your doctor or chemist about your health?

Always tell them about your sickness. The more you tell the doctor at the AMS or the mob at the chemist the more they can help you.



Tell your doctor or chemist about your medicines?



The more you tell the doctor at the AMS or the mob at the chemist the better it is for them so they can give you the right medicines for you sickness.

It's better for you two to sit down and talk about your medicines.



- Tell them what medicines you are having
- Tell them how many times a day you are taking them
- Tell them when you started having them
- Also tell them when you stopped having your medicines



Ask your doctor or chemist about your medicines?

The more questions you ask at the chemist or the AMS the better you will understand the medicines they are giving you and how they work for your body.



- Ask them what the medicine is for
- How does the medicine work in my body?
- How do I use the medicines?
- How long do I have to have the medicine for?
- When do I have to stop having the medicine?
- Will it make me feel any better?
- Will the medicine make my stomach (Tummy) no good?
- What will happen if I don't take the medicine?
- Ask them if there is any medicines that you don't need to have

These questions will tell you about your medicines, and how it works in your body.

- Do you feel better after you had the medicine?
- Did the medicine stop the pain?
- How long will I have to have the medicine for?
- Do I take the medicines with food?
- Do I take the medicine in the morning or at night?

You can make it easier to talk to the doctor or the chemist?

Before you go to the chemist or the doctor make a list of all the medicines you are taking.



Take one of your relatives with you to the chemist or the doctor.

Ask the doctor or the mob at the chemist to write down anything that you don't know about the medicines you are taking.

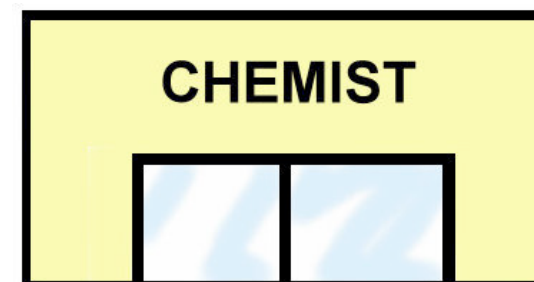


You may feel your doctor or chemist doesn't always understand you?

You should make the doctor or the mob at the chemist your friend, it might take some time to do this.



So if this is not working you can always go to another doctor or use another chemist.



Generic Medicines?



These medicines are good medicines too and are cheaper than the normal medicines.

When the chemist makes the medicines they make sure that no other chemist is making that medicine or selling that medicine.

That same mob can make that medicine for the next 10 or 20 years.

Then the other chemists can make the same medicines.

These medicines are called generics, or generic medicines.

Many of the medicines that you can get at the chemist are called generic medicines.

Are generic medicines the same as the brand medicines?

These medicines are good medicines too and are cheaper than the normal medicines.



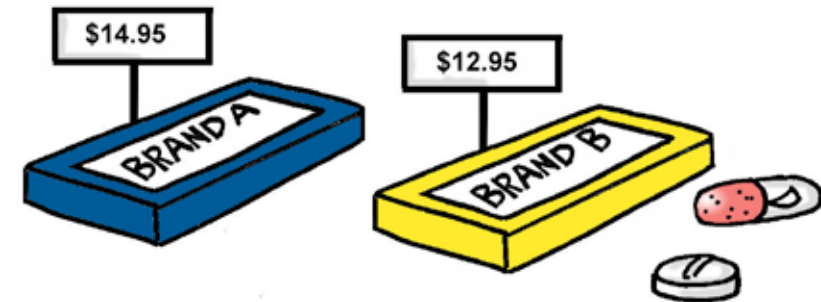
Generic medicines mean they are the same medicines but got a different brand name.

They do the same thing as the other medicine you might be having, and they do the same thing to make your body better but it can still upset your stomach (Tummy) like the other ones.

Generic medicines can be different in many ways, and they might have some different stuff in them to make the medicine better.

They can come in different packets and different colours or come in a capsule not a tablet.

Ask questions at the AMS or chemist about Generic Medicines.



Are they safe?

All medicines come with some sort of risk.



The people that make them have to show the Australian Government that the medicine they are making have the same stuff in them as the original ones.

If they have the same stuff in them then it's alright to use them.

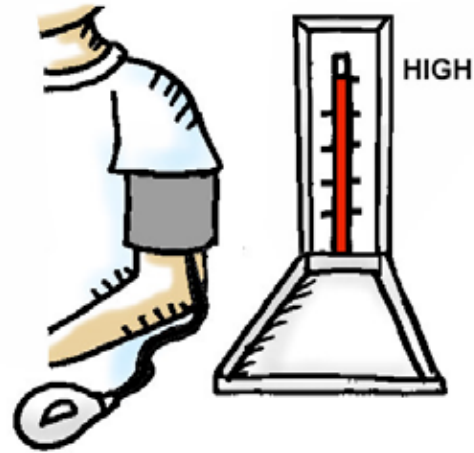
The generic medicines might not be good for some people, they might be allergic to them if they got gluten, lactose or preservatives in them.

Are there any reasons I shouldn't use generic medicines?



Could be, the doctor or the mob at the chemist might want you to change to a different one which might have a different name on it.

For example for the people who are having Warfarin the one that thins the blood, they should be using the same one that they started with first unless the doctor has told them to have it changed.



People that have allergic reactions to these sorts of medicines should stop using them straight away.



All your medicines should be checked carefully by the doctor at the AMS or the mob at the chemist so nothing serious happens to you. Some different names of medicines can be confusing.

If you come out of hospital but you don't usually see that same doctor they might give some other different medicine.

Tell them mob at the hospital to explain to you what they are, and if they are stronger than the other ones that you been having before you went into the hospital. Some people might not want to change their medicines.

Ask the hospital to write down about your medicines and give it to you or a family member.

Talk to the AMS or mob at the chemist about the hospital medicines.



Why would I want to use generic medicines?

The best thing about generic medicines is that they are cheaper than the other ones.



Some might be dearer too but they still do the same thing as the other medicines do. You can also use your healthcare card to get them cheaper.

New medicines - are they always better?

The Australian Government approve new medicines every year, and attempts to make sure that they are better than the old ones they made but sometimes that is not true.



Here are three things you might want to think about

- Did the government say they was good medicines to use
- What do people think about these new medicines
- What sort of information did they get back from the people that used them before everyone else got to use them?



Government approves safety?

The Government makes sure that the medicines that they approve are safe for you in three different ways



1. Through the Therapeutic Goods Administration these mob tell the government if the medicines are good to use or not and whether they can sell them in Australia. You can go to this website www.tga.gov.au if you are unsure about the medicines.
2. The medicines is also agreed by government so they can give the medicine to you cheaper under the Pharmaceutical (Chemist) Benefit Scheme if it shows that the new medicine is good as the other ones and at a cheaper price.
3. A new medicine might not be good as the others but it has to be good enough for you to have. It has to be safe enough to use as the other ones.

Individual response differ?

Everybody is different and the medicines work differently for everybody.



One medicine might not work for you but might work better for someone else, and one medicine might work for you but not work for someone else. Some medicines might take time to work for you it doesn't mean you have to stop taking your medicine.

This can be very dangerous for some people if they stop taking their medicine give the medicine some time to do its job, always remember that some medicines you might have to take with food, remember this too that some medicines you take with food might give you a upset stomach, if you feel that the medicine you a taking is not working for you go back and talk to the mob at the AMS or the chemist.



Research in the clinics show that when a big mob of people take medicine that some of them feel better and some of them might not feel so good. The medicine that made one mob sick might not make the other mob sick.

Knowledge gained after approval?



When a new medicine is made and it has been through a big mob of clinic trials on a big mob of people.

By the time this trial is finished it will tell them if this medicine is no good or if it is good. If the bad medicine is going to do bad things for your body then they won't use it anymore.



What does this mean for me?

You should seriously think about taking new medicines because some of them might not work for you



All the new medicines do is add to the rest of the other ones and might not be good for your health.

If you are taking some medicines and it makes you feel no good you should talk to your doctor at the AMS or the mob at the chemist and tell them that it is no good for you.

And tell them that you want to change the medicines, but you must remember that the new medicines might make you feel no good and it might upset your stomach (Tummy). If the medicine that you are taking now is good for you then you should seriously think about staying with them ones.



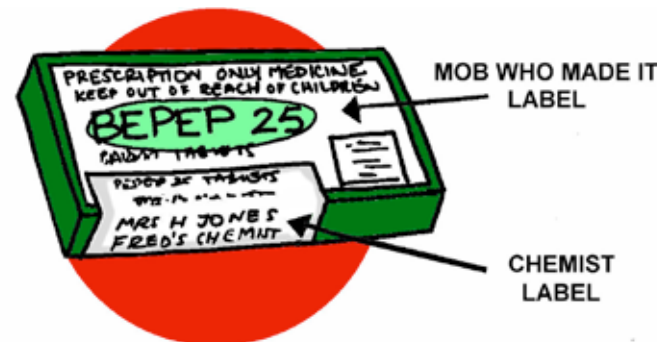
You must never give your medicine or any other medicine to anyone else in your family even if they have the same problems as you, this would be very dangerous to them, they might even die from taking your medicine.

Tell them to go to the AMS and see a doctor to get their own medicine.

You must always read the writing on your medicine, take the right amount of medicine the right way because it is very important for your health.

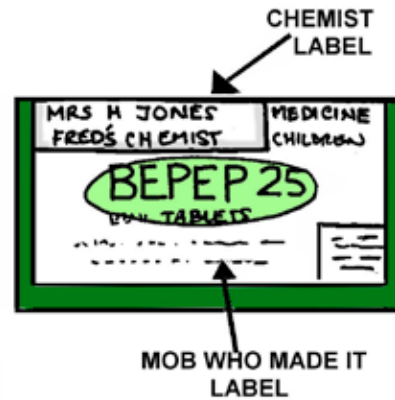


The medicine packet or bottle will have a sticker on it from the mob that made it and another one from the chemist. There might be two stickers on the packet or the bottle, one is for what the medicine is made of and the other one is for the people that made it.

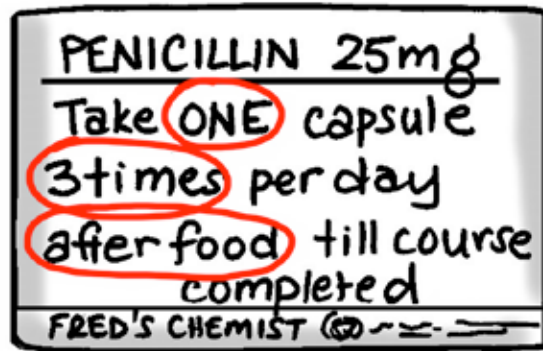


Some medicines have the name of the people who made it on the top and what the medicine is made of on the bottom.

Sometimes it might be the other way around too.



Some might just have the sticker with what the medicine is made of. The sticker on the packet or the bottle should have words like



- When should I take my medicine or tablets?
- How much medicine or tablets should I be taking?
- Always ask the mob at the AMS or chemist when is the best time for you take your medicine.
- Should I be taking my medicine or tablets 2 times a day or once a day?
- If you can't read the label properly or you don't understand the words on the label take it back to the mob at the AMS or the chemist and ask them to explain the writing on the label for you

The sticker on the packet or the bottle will tell you how strong the medicine is, some stickers for tablets and capsules might tell you how much they weigh too



For some cough medicines or syrups even creams or lotions and maybe even needles they should tell you how strong they are on the sticker that means how much of the strong medicine is in it.



Lot of medicines might be weak ones or they might be strong ones.

If that medicine you are having is too strong for you stop taking it and tell the doctor at the AMS or the mob at the chemist that they are too strong for you. Also you can ring this number for the Medicine Line on 1300 888 763

The instructions on the sticker will tell you how much medicine you should be taking and how long you should be taking it for.

Sometimes it might say take one tablet two times a day till they all finished you might have to take the tablet with some food too.

If you follow the instructions on the sticker it will make the medicine work better for you. It will help you to not take too much of the medicine also



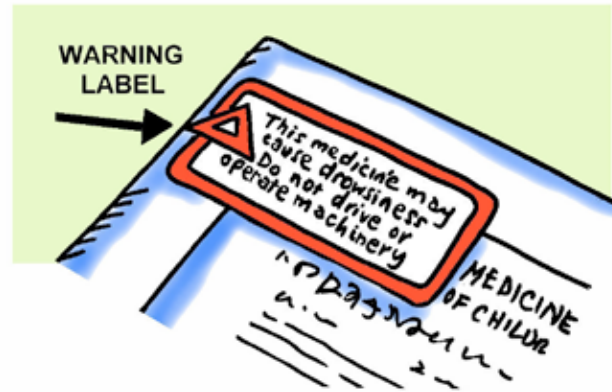
If you don't understand the instructions on the sticker, ask the chemist or the AMS

This is very IMPORTANT



Some stickers on the packets and on the bottles will have a warning on it, this is to let you know that you can't drive a car or a truck when you on that sort of medicines.

That's why you must always read the instructions.



You must always store your medicines in a cool dry place away from the kids.



You should also check that the date on the medicines is the right date if they not the right date you should take them to the AMS or the chemist and they will get rid of them for you.



So for more information about medicines you can call this number and they will help you. Medicine Line on 1300 888 763.

And if you got a computer at home you can go to National Prescribing Service www.nps.org.au



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