



Royal Perth Hospital Pharmacy Services



Helping you to manage your medicines safely

Hospital pharmacist information
for patients and carers





Your hospital pharmacist is a qualified health professional who forms part of the health care team within the hospital. Your pharmacist will visit your ward at least once a day between 8.30am – 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

Your hospital pharmacist may be working on a few different wards, so if you have urgent questions for them you may ask the nurses to contact them for you.

The name of your pharmacist for ward _____
is _____

How we help you

Your hospital pharmacist will:

- › regularly review your medications
- › work closely with your doctors and nurses to ensure you receive safe, effective drug treatment that best suits your needs
- › ask about allergies or unexpected reactions to medications that you may have had in the past.

Supply of medicines

Your hospital pharmacist will supply your medications while you are on the ward. There may be special circumstances where your own medicines may need to be used during your stay in hospital. If you have any questions about this please ask to speak to your ward pharmacist.

Discharge

Once your treating team decides that you may be discharged, your doctor will need to write your discharge letter and prescription.

Once this is done, your pharmacist will:

- › review the prescription, making sure everything you need is prescribed
- › assist with arranging your supply of medications on discharge
- › send the prescription to the hospital pharmacy for dispensing and final checking.

Organising discharge medications in the hospital can take some time. The pharmacy staff will do their best to provide your medications in a timely manner and appreciate your patience and understanding with this.



Understanding your medicines

When receiving new medications, you will be provided with important information including:

- › their purpose
- › how to take them
- › possible side effects.

It is important to make sure you understand how to take all your medications before you leave hospital.

Possible changes that could occur to your medications whilst in hospital include:

- › stopping taking a medication
- › increase or decrease in doses
- › starting new medications which you have to continue taking after you are discharged.

If you are unsure about any of the medications that you are being given whilst in hospital, please ask your doctor, pharmacist or nurse to explain what they are for. Your current medication list will be included in your discharge letter which is provided to you and your GP once you are discharged from hospital. If you require a separate medication list please ask your doctor or pharmacist.

We can also provide information leaflets for many medications, called Consumer Medicine Information (CMI), which contain information such as side effects of the medication, what it is used for and how to take it.



What you can do to help us

In order to review all your medications thoroughly we need to know the names of all the medications you have been taking at home, including medications you have bought from:

- › the local pharmacy
- › a health food shop
- › the supermarket.

These can affect medications that are prescribed by the doctor.

The medications that we need to know about include:

- › Prescription medicines
- › Over the counter medicines
- › Vitamins and nutritional supplements
- › Herbal medicines
- › Creams, ointments or patches
- › Inhalers
- › Eye, ear, nose or throat drops/sprays
- › Injections or implants
- › Pessaries or suppositories
- › Painkillers or sleeping tablets
- › Oral contraceptives
- › Hormone replacement therapy
- › Medicines for constipation or diarrhoea
- › Social or recreational drugs
- › Medicines for indigestion or heartburn
- › Other people's medications that you are taking

This ensures we have a complete and accurate medication history for you and helps us to safely manage your medication while you are in hospital.

Ensuring your safety

To help us safely administer your medications or other treatments, please remember to show your ID bracelet to staff and state your name clearly each time.

Ensuring best care

You may find that different people are asking the same questions about your medications. For example, you may already have given a list of your medications to the doctor in the Emergency Department. This is because we need to ensure the list is accurate, confirm any changes that have been made and ensure nothing has been forgotten.

Your own medicines

We encourage you to bring all of your usual medications into hospital so your ward pharmacist can review them with you. Most beds at Royal Perth Hospital have lockable bedside drawers where your medications can be kept safely. It is okay for you to ask after your own medications if you are transferred to another ward, or upon being discharged.

Helpful questions to ask your pharmacist

- › What is the medication supposed to do?
- › How do I take it and for how long?
- › Are there any foods, drinks or other medications to avoid?
- › Are there any side-effects and what should I do if they occur?
- › What should I do if I miss a dose?



Other activities hospital pharmacists perform ‘behind the scenes’

- › Provide up-to-date information to doctors, nurses and other hospital staff relating to medications, including type and dose of medications for individual patients.
- › Ensure none of the new medications you receive interact with the medications you were taking before you came into hospital.
- › Provide advice to nurses on how to give medications.
- › Dispense medications for inpatients and outpatients.
- › Monitor and report side-effects caused by medications.
- › Provide sterile medications under special conditions e.g. intravenous medications, eye drops and anti-cancer medications.
- › Manufacture other special products e.g. mixtures and creams.
- › Advise the hospital on the selection of new medications.
- › Assist with designing and running trials to evaluate new medications.
- › Coordinate, prepare and monitor intravenous feed formulae (for those patients unable to have food).



Managing your medications safely

It can be useful to keep a written record of your medications. Your hospital pharmacist can provide a printed list for you. Alternatively, a medicines list is available at www.nps.org.au/medicines.

The National Prescribing Service (NPS) have also developed the **MedicineList+** smartphone app which is free to download. This can help you to keep an up-to-date medicines list with you at all times and remind you how and when to take your medicines.

If you are buying medications from a pharmacy or if your doctor prescribes a new medicine, you **must** always tell your doctor or pharmacist about the medications you are already taking. This includes any medications you have had allergies or reactions to in the past. If you have an up-to-date medication list you can show this to the doctor or pharmacist.

It is important to make sure you don't run out of your medicines, for example when you are going on holiday, or during busy holiday periods such as Christmas and Easter.

After you leave hospital

Remember that your local pharmacist and GP are available to assist with your day-to-day medication queries. Alternatively, you can obtain information about your medicines online at www.nps.org.au/medicines or call the NPS Medicines Line 1300 633 424 (Monday to Friday 9am-5pm AEST)





This document can be made available in alternative formats on request.

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*Adapted from the SHPA 'Introducing your hospital pharmacist' leaflet, The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne 'Your hospital pharmacist information for patients and parents' leaflet, and the WA Office of Safety and Quality leaflet 'Managing your medications safely' booklet. Royal Perth Hospital Pharmacy Services: Helping you to manage your medicines safely.

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