Information About Your Medicines

This leaflet explains how we will deal with your medicines following an admission to hospital, during your stay and on discharge. It is important we have full information about your medicines so we can make sure you get the right treatment and the right dose at the right time.

Coming into hospital

When you come into hospital please bring with you all the medicines you are currently taking and your repeat slip or an up-to-date list of your medication. This includes medicines that have been prescribed by your GP and anything else you currently take (e.g. those that you have bought yourself).

They may include:

- Tablets, capsules, liquids and powders
- Creams and ointments
- Eye/ear/nose drops
- Inhalers and nebulisers
- Contraceptive pills or hormone replacement therapy
- Patches, such as nicotine replacement therapy patches
- Suppositories or pessaries
- Injections
- Herbal or homeopathic remedies
- Vitamins and supplements
- Medicines used to help you sleep
- Any booklets or other information that you use to monitor your medication (e.g. treatment cards or booklets you have been given with your medication – your anticoagulant / warfarin booklet, steroid card, lithium card etc.)

If you receive your medicines in a blister pack or pill box, please bring it with you.

Why we need to know about the medicines you are taking

It is important that we have a complete picture of the medicines you are taking so that:

- We can check the nature and strength of the medicines you are taking.
- We can continue to prescribe those medicines while you are in hospital and avoid you missing a dose.
- We can make sure that when you leave the hospital you have enough of the medicines you need.
- We can remove and dispose of any medicines you no longer require.
- It can help speed up the discharge process.
- We can help you to use your medicines safely.

Do not take any other medicines while you are inpatient without letting the hospital staff know first.

Important: If you are allergic or sensitive to any medicines, you must let the hospital staff know as soon as you or your carer are able.

What if you forget to bring them in?

Ask a relative or friend to bring your medicines in when they visit and if possible a list of your medication from the doctor's surgery. If this is not possible we will provide the medicines you need during your stay. This may involve making some changes, especially if the hospital does not routinely stock any of your medication.

During your stay

A pharmacist, pharmacy technician or nurse will check your medicines with you. To keep them safe, they will be locked away either in the bedside locker or a designated medicines cupboard on the ward.
If you have any questions about your medicine the pharmacist, pharmacy technician, nurse or doctor will be able to give you information about the medicines you are taking.

If you would like to take your medicines yourself, please ask the nurse or pharmacy team if they have a scheme where you can self-administer your own medicines.

Understanding your medication

It is important that you or your carer are fully aware of the medicines you are being given and understand what they are for. If, you or your carer notice there has been a change in dose or medication please tell a member of the pharmacy team or nurse.

Sometimes the hospital may give you a different manufacturer’s brand of your medicine, which may not look the same as your usual medicine. If you have any concerns, speak to the doctor, nurse or a member of the pharmacy team.

When you leave hospital

We will make sure you are supplied with at least two weeks of medication to take home.

You will be told how to take your medicines, any common side effects and how to store your medicines safely.

If you would like an information sheet about your medicines, please ask your nurse, hospital doctor or a member of the pharmacy team and they will print one out for you. We will send a current list of your medicines to your doctor.

Hospital staff will ask your permission to safely dispose of any medication that you no longer need. If you have any old medicines at home please take them to your local pharmacy for disposal.

Checklist (before you leave hospital)

- Ask about changes made to your medicines in hospital.
- Make sure you know which medicines have been stopped. Do not restart them at home unless advised to do so by your doctor.
- Ask if you need an information leaflet for any of your newly prescribed or regular medicines.
- Make sure you have enough of all the medicines listed on your discharge letter.
- Make sure you know how much of each medicine you need to take and when to take it. If you are not sure, please ask for advice.
- Ask about commonly experienced or expected side effects of your medication.
- Make sure you have the discharge letter for your GP.
- Make sure you have enough bandages, dressings and appliances.
- Make sure you have a date for your next appointment and/or blood test and an appointment card for follow-up visits, particularly if you are taking a blood-thinning drug (anticoagulant) such as warfarin.

What support is there after you leave hospital?

Your local pharmacy will be able to give you advice and support after you leave the hospital such as the New Medicines Service (NMS) or Medicines Use Review (MUR) if needed. These services are confidential and you will be able to talk to your community pharmacist in a private area in the pharmacy.

You can speak to your pharmacist or GP if you experience any side effects from your medication, who can advise you what to do (do not stop taking your medication without discussing with your GP or pharmacist first).

If you experience any unexpected effects from your medication, you may wish to report these to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), which can be done via their website: www.yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk

Further information

Ask your ward pharmacist or pharmacy technician if you have any questions or want to know more about your medicines.