

Health and Social Care is committed to making information as accessible as possible and to promoting meaningful engagement. Requests for this leaflet in another format or language will be considered.

### **What information should prescribers provide?**

Prescribers (doctors, nurses or pharmacists) must adhere to strict professional standards when they prescribe a medicine and always answer questions that you may have in relation to medicines prescribed.

When medicines are prescribed, in order to establish an effective partnership, you **must** be given sufficient information to allow you to make an informed decision. This should include:

- What are the benefits?
- What other treatment options are available?
- Whether the medicine is licensed or unlicensed?
- The dose and frequency of medicine to be taken?
- How long the medicine should be taken for?
- Potential risks and side effects of the medicine?

### **Further information is available at the following websites:**

#### **Professional standards for doctors, nurses and pharmacists:**

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General Medical Council (GMC) Home Page

[www.gmc-uk.org](http://www.gmc-uk.org)

Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)

Home Page

[www.nmc-uk.org](http://www.nmc-uk.org)

Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (PSNI) Home Page

[www.psni.org.uk](http://www.psni.org.uk)

#### **Reporting Side Effects of Medicines**

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Yellow Card Scheme

[www.yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk](http://www.yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk)

#### **Information on Medicines**

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British National Formulary – includes children (registration required)

[www.bnf.org](http://www.bnf.org)

Electronic Medicines Compendium

[www.medicines.org.uk](http://www.medicines.org.uk)

Medicines for children – practical advice

[www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk](http://www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk)



**Your Medicines**  
Effective Partnership in Care



The use of medicines has transformed care for patients. Patients and their carers have a vital role to play in managing medicines and being involved in making decisions about care.

In establishing an effective partnership in managing medicines with the prescriber, you as a patient/carer need to be fully informed. If you feel you haven't received sufficient information or if you simply wish to find out more about your role, please read this leaflet carefully and if necessary, seek further advice from your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

### Definition of a medicine

The term medicine refers to any substance used to prevent or treat a medical condition, including tablets, capsules, liquid medicine, liquid given by injection, inhalers, suppositories, creams, ointments and patches which are prescribed by your doctor or which you buy at the pharmacy.

### What can I do next if I have questions or need more information?

If you have any issues or would like more information about prescribed medicines you should:

1. Speak to your pharmacist or arrange an appointment with the prescriber (usually your doctor) to ask for advice e.g. explanation of what the purpose of the medication is; what the expected benefits are; what the risks (or side-effects) might be.
2. Always read the leaflet provided by your pharmacist with the medicine. All medicines **must** be supplied with an information leaflet which describes what the medicine is used for, how to take it, and any known side-effects. There are some details that are not necessarily relevant e.g. the leaflet may have been written about use of the medicine in a particular patient group. However, some of the information will still be useful. If there is anything you read that gives you cause for concern or anxiety, discuss it immediately with the pharmacist or prescriber.

### What is a licensed medicine?

A drug company must have a licence to advertise and sell a medicine. The licence states which illness the medicine can be used for, what doses (how much) can be used, how the medicine should be given (e.g. by mouth, by injection) and which group of patients it can be used for. The clinical trials which provide the supporting information for the licence are normally completed in adults and so the licence may not specify other groups. Quite often, a drug company will not conduct clinical trials in specialised groups of patients such as children or older people. Therefore many of the medicines used in specialised groups such as children are used in an unlicensed way. Using unlicensed medicines is not necessarily unsafe, but it is important that parents are aware of the risks and benefits of any prescribed medicine.

3. If you think that you have experienced a **side-effect** from a medicine, it is important to discuss this immediately with your doctor or pharmacist. You can also report via the national Yellow Card Scheme (website can be found on back of leaflet) so that we can make medicines safer.

Please note: It is important that you do not stop medicines that have been prescribed without first consulting with your doctor or pharmacist.