

You and Your Medicines

For your health and safety while in our birthing unit

Your safety is important to us. We encourage you to be actively involved in your care. We want you to feel comfortable asking us questions about your medicines.

This sheet gives you tips on how we can work together to make sure you take your medicines safely, both while in the hospital and when you get home.

Medicine safety while in hospital

Do not take a medicine in either of these situations:

- When you do not know what the medicine is.
- When you do not know why we are giving it to you.

For safety reasons, we provide the medicines you need while in the hospital.

Please tell us about the medicines you take at home. This includes herbal medicines, natural products, vitamins, and supplements. We compare what you take at home with the medicines supplied by us. We do this to make sure you have all the medicines you need. Let us know if you have brought any of your own medicines so we can review them with you.

While in the hospital, we might need to make changes to your medicines. We might change any of these:

- the type of medicine
- the amount of medicine
- the time that you take the medicine
- the colour or shape of the medicine

You can help your healthcare team make sure we give you the correct medicine at the correct time by asking us questions. Ask questions of both the person prescribing the medicine and the person giving the medicine to you.

Feel free to ask us any of these questions:

1. *Can you check my hospital wristband and ask my name?*
You want to make sure we are giving the correct medicine to the correct person.
2. *Have you checked my allergies?*
This reminds us to learn more about any allergic or bad reaction you have had in the past from either medicines or food.
3. *What is the name of this medicine?*
Medicine names can sound similar to each other. Make sure you can repeat the name of the medicine. This way you know what medicine we are giving you and can confirm you are not allergic to the medicine.
4. *Why am I taking this medicine?*
We want you to be fully aware of why you are taking your medicine.
5. *How will this medicine be given to me?*
We give medicines in different ways: by mouth, into a vein (intravenously), into a muscle (intramuscularly), or into the rectum. You should know how we are giving the medicine because it might be different from how you take it at home.
6. *Does this medicine have any side effects?*
It is important for you to know about possible side effects so you can watch out for them. If you notice any side effect, tell your healthcare team.

Prescriber: doctors, midwives, nurse practitioners, dentists, podiatrists, and naturopathic doctors who prescribe medicines.

7. *What time of day should I take this medicine?*

Medicines need to be taken at the right time of day or night. Let your healthcare team know when you normally take your medicines. We check to see if these are the right times for the medicine. We might change when you take your medicines.

8. *Are my medicines safe to take together?*

Some medicines cannot be taken with other medicines or products and substances. This is because they can interact with each other, affecting how they work in your body. The result can be a danger to your health.

Tell your healthcare team about all these types of medicines, products, and substances:

- prescription medicines ordered by your prescriber and supplied by a pharmacy, such as pills, inhalers, and creams
- injections such as insulin and vaccines
- medicines you buy without a prescription such as pain medicines, laxatives, antacids, and iron
- medicine samples usually given to you by your prescriber
- vitamins, minerals, supplements, herbal medicines, and natural remedies (such as vitamin D, vitamin C, fenugreek)
- alcohol, cannabis products, recreational drugs, and street drugs

Medicine errors

We do our best to prevent medicine errors, but if an error happens:

- We act right away and report it to you.
- We record the error.
- We review the reason for the error.
- We learn from the error so we can prevent it from happening in the future.

How you can help us reduce errors:

- Ask about a medicine if it does not look familiar.
- Check with us if we give a medicine at a different time from your usual time.
- Let us know if you think you are not getting your usual medicine.
- Stop us if you think we are going to give you the wrong medicine.
- Tell us if you do not feel well after taking a medicine.

Talk to your healthcare team anytime you have questions about this information, about the medicines you are taking, or the medicines you might be starting when you go home.

Before you go home from the hospital

The medicines you take when you go home might be different from what you took before you came into the hospital. Make sure to ask your nurse or prescriber any questions you might have about any changes to your medicines when you go home.

Before you leave, we give you a summary of which medicines to start, continue, and stop, as well as any changes to your medicines for after your hospital stay. The form's name is "*Maternity Best Possible Medication Discharge Plan and Discharge Prescription*".

This form is also your prescription for medicines to take at home. Take this form to your local pharmacy to fill the prescription.

If you have any questions or concerns about the safety of your medicines in pregnancy or in your breast milk or chest milk, talk to your healthcare team.

For you

[My Medication Card](#): A tool to help you keep track of your medicines and allergies. Print it or save it to fill out electronically. Available in a number of languages.

