

Information about your medicines

Information for patients

Do you have any questions about the medicines you have been prescribed?

For example:

- How and when should I take these medicines?
- Can I take other medicines at the same time?
- Are there any side effects?
- How long should I be taking this medicine for?
- Where can I get further supplies?

This leaflet contains some possible sources of further advice and some general information about medicines.

Information sources available from Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust

• The Medicines Helpline

 **01892 634216**

This is a telephone helpline available to answer any questions you have regarding medicines prescribed for you at the Tunbridge Wells Hospital at Pembury or the Maidstone Hospital. Unfortunately we cannot answer questions about medicines from your own doctor or about your illness in general. The Helpline is open:

Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.30pm

- **Your discharge letter**

If you were an inpatient at hospital you will have been given a copy of your discharge letter. This is the same letter that will be sent to your GP and contains information about how your medicines have been prescribed and supplied.

Where else can I find information?

- **The patient information leaflet**

Each medicine is dispensed with a leaflet, (usually found in the medicine container), giving detailed information about that specific medicine.

- **Your local community pharmacist (chemist)**

Your community pharmacist can offer you advice and support with your medicines to ensure that you are using them effectively. If you have been prescribed a new medicine for a long-term illness, ask your local pharmacy about the **NHS New Medicine Service**.

- **Your General Practitioner (GP) Practice**

Your GP may be the most appropriate person to speak to regarding your medicines if you need further supplies or believe you are experiencing serious side effects from your new medicine. Many GP surgeries have a practice pharmacist who can also offer information and support on medicines.

- **NHS 111**



If you need urgent help with your medicines and cannot contact any of the above, telephone NHS 111. This service offers health information and advice from specially trained nurses 24 hours a day.

- **NHS Choices**

 www.nhs.uk

This website provides information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare along with a Medicine A to Z, which has information on commonly prescribed medicines.

- **The hospital switchboard**  01622 729000

If you have a question which does not relate to medicine, for example about an out-patient appointment, please call the hospital switchboard and they can put you through to the correct department.

General advice about your medicine

Side effects

All medicines can cause side effects. The majority of these are mild and temporary; however, some can be serious. They can appear after you have been taking a medicine for a long time or even after stopping a medicine. Some side effects are linked to the way the medicine works to treat your condition; these effects are predictable and may require a small adjustment of your dose. Some are not clearly linked to the medicinal effects and are therefore unpredictable.

Remember that not everyone will experience side effects, even those described as “common” occur in only a few people in every 100 treated. When deciding with your doctor that you should take a medicine, consider the risks of any side effect against the benefit you will gain from taking the medicine. In the United Kingdom, a medicine will only be licensed for use if the benefit of its medicinal effect has been proved to outweigh the risks of any potential side effects.

Storage advice

- Please check the packaging of your medicine for any specific storage advice. For example, if your medicine must be kept in the fridge it will say on the label. If there are no specific storage instructions, we suggest you keep your medicines in a single place which is out of the reach of children.
- It is important to keep your medicine in its original packaging so that it can be identified easily, the instructions are clear, it is safely protected from light or water and the expiry date is known.
- Keep your medicines separate from anyone else's in your household to avoid confusion.

Supply of medicine

- Medicine which you brought into hospital and still need will be returned to you when you go home. If you have started a new medicine, you will be given a supply to take home.
- Your GP will prescribe more if required, according to the information on your discharge letter if you were an inpatient, or on the pink slip given to you with your medicine if you were an outpatient.

Disposal of medicine

- Any medicine you have left over once your course is complete, or your medicine has been stopped, can be returned to the hospital pharmacy or your local community pharmacy for safe disposal.
 - Sharps bins are provided for disposal of needles and used syringes, **they can only be disposed of by a licensed authority** - you will be given separate instructions with your sharps bin on how to do this.
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Please use this space for your notes

MTW NHS Trust is committed to making its patient information accessible in a range of languages and formats. If you need this leaflet in another language or format please ask one of your clinical care team or the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). We will do our best to arrange this.

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust welcomes all forms of feedback from our service users. If the standard of service you have received from the Trust does not meet your expectations, we want to hear from you. Please speak with the ward manager or the nurse in charge in the first instance, or you can contact the **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)** on:

Telephone: ☎ 01622 224960 or ☎ 01892 632953

Email: mtw-tr.palsoffice@nhs.net

or visit their office at either Maidstone or Tunbridge Wells Hospital between 9.00am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

You can be confident that your care will not be affected by highlighting any areas of concern or making a complaint. The Trust will retain a record of your contact, which is held separately to any medical records. If you are acting on behalf of a patient, we may need to obtain the patient's consent in order to protect patient confidentiality. More information on PALS or making a complaint can be found on the Trust's website: www.mtw.nhs.uk or pick up a leaflet from main reception.

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