



Being an
active partner
in your care

veteransmates.net.au

TALKING TO MY GP AND PHARMACIST ABOUT MY MEDICINES

If you take a number of medicines, make sure to keep talking with your GP about how you are going with them all. A Medicines Review in your place of residence with a pharmacist, is one way for you and your GP to check that you are getting the most benefit from your medicines.

- A Medicines Review (a Home Medicines Review if you live in your home; or a Residential Medication Management Review if you live in a residential aged care facility) is a service funded by the Australian Government to help you get the best from your medicines.
- At a Medicines Review, the pharmacist asks you to talk about every medicine you use and how you take it.
- After the Medicines Review, the pharmacist reports back their findings to your GP. Your GP will then talk with you about any changes that might benefit you.

Here are four important questions for you:

1. Do you know what each of your medicines is for?

YES
 NO

If you answered no, ask your GP or pharmacist to describe what each medicine is for and what it does to help you. At the same time your GP can review your medicines and check that they are still the best options for you.

Medicines include those prescribed by your GP or specialist, and also any vitamins, supplements or non-prescription medicine that you might buy online, from the supermarket, pharmacy or health food store.

2. Do you have an up-to-date list of all the medicines you take?

YES
 NO

Your GP and pharmacist can help create a list of all your medicines. Take the list to all of your medical appointments and have handy in the case of an emergency. Learn more about having a medicines list and instructions for how to create one at: www.nps.org.au/consumers/keeping-a-medicines-list

3. Do you think any of your medicines might be causing side effects?

YES
 NO

It can be tricky to know if your medicines are causing a side effect, so talk to your GP or pharmacist if you notice any changes in how you feel after starting a medicine or after changing the dose of one of your medicines. Talk to your GP if something in your body is not feeling quite right, or a symptom bothers you and it doesn't improve, for example if your stomach is upset or you feel a bit dizzy.

You might assume your body feels this way because you are getting older or

your condition is worsening, but it could be that your medicines need adjusting or changing. Physical changes that occur as we get older can make our bodies more sensitive to the effects of medicines, even those you have taken for a long time. Side effects are more likely when you start a new medicine or when you increase the dose of a medicine. Often these are mild and resolve on their own. But, if side effects continue to bother you, even if they are only mildly uncomfortable, talk to your

Always talk to your doctor before stopping, starting or changing any of your medicines.

GP or pharmacist about reviewing your medicines.

Any medicine or supplement can cause side effects, even those you buy from a supermarket, pharmacy, online or health

food store. When some medicines interact they cause side effects, in this case, one of your medicines might need to be changed.

4. Would you like to reduce the number of medicines that you currently take?

YES
 NO

If you answer yes, talk to your GP and pharmacist about the medicines you take and make sure you understand the reasons why you take them. Over time, what is most important to you about your health, treatment or medicines, might have changed. Have a chat with your GP about why you prefer not to take so many medicines and if there are any of them that bother you in particular. There might be a non-medicine option that you can try.



Answer the questions in this brochure and take it with you to your next GP appointment. Talk to your GP about whether you might benefit from having a Medicines Review. The pharmacist can go through each of these questions with you at their visit.

Useful resources

- How a Medicines Review in your home can help you get the most from your medicines:
www.nps.org.au/assets/NPS/pdf/NPSMW2390_Anticholinergics_HMR_Factsheet.pdf
- Side effects from your medicines: 5 questions to ask:
www.nps.org.au/professionals/anticholinergic-burden/consumers/side-effects-from-your-medicines-5-questions-to-ask
- 9 quick safety tips to manage your medications:
www.deprescribingnetwork.ca/blog/2018/2/6/9-tips-medications

Having a Medicines Review – what to expect?



Step 1: You, a family member, carer, nurse, pharmacist or your GP may suggest a Medicines Review.



Step 2: If you and your GP agree to a Medicines Review, your GP writes a referral to a specially trained pharmacist (known as an accredited pharmacist). Your usual community pharmacist might be able to conduct this review; otherwise another pharmacist will be available to do this.



Step 3: The pharmacist contacts you to organise a suitable time and place for the Medicines Review. There is no cost to you for the service.



This is usually conducted in your home, which is the best place. In response to COVID-19, telehealth services such as video conferencing services may be offered where a patient meets certain criteria, e.g. aged over 70, with chronic health conditions or meets the criteria for suspected COVID-19 infection. Where a pharmacist visits you in the home, social distancing, hand sanitising and wearing a mask by both parties is recommended.



Step 4: At the Medicines Review you and the pharmacist discuss all the medicines you are taking. If you wish, have a family member, friend or carer present. Answer the questions in this brochure and ask the pharmacist to go through them at their visit.



Step 5: Following the visit the pharmacist sends your GP a summary which might include better or easier ways to manage your medicines, and whether there are any changes that might be needed to your medicines.



Step 6: Make a specific appointment with your GP to discuss the Medicines Review and whether any changes could be of benefit to you. Your GP can give you a written Medication Management Plan on completion of the review.