

# MANAGING *Your* MEDICINES

The purpose of this booklet is  
to explain how we manage your  
medicines in Cork University Hospital



A Safety Initiative on behalf of Cork University Hospital Pharmacy  
Department & Drugs and Therapeutics Committee



## WHEN YOU COME TO HOSPITAL

**When you come to hospital we need to know all the medicines you usually take at home.**

**This includes:**

- Medicines prescribed by a doctor or nurse – tablets, inhalers, nebulisers, liquids, topical patches, injections, creams.
- Medicines you bought over-the-counter in a supermarket or pharmacy.
- Herbal medicines or vitamin supplements.

**Why does the hospital need a list of my medicines?**

A list of your medicines will help us make sure we give you all the medicines you need while you are in hospital.

## **What if I don't have a list of my medicines?**

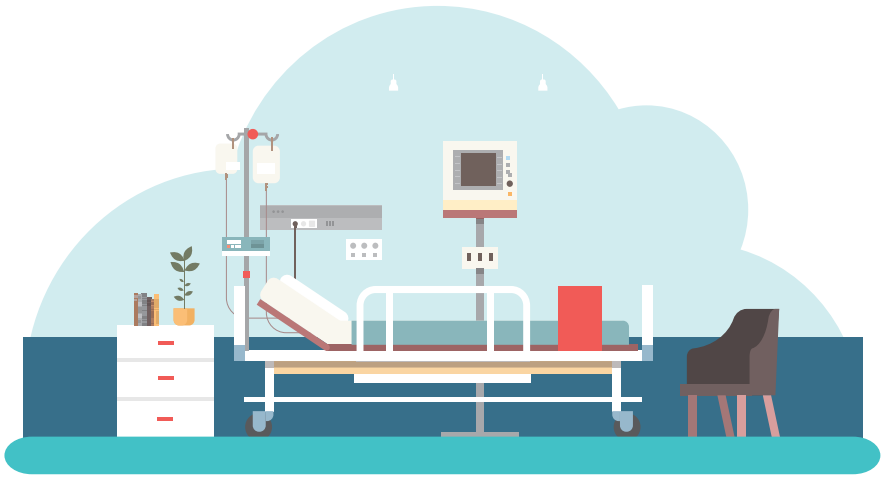
- Do not worry if you don't have a list of the medicines you take at home.
- If you agree, we will contact your doctor and/or community pharmacy to check the medicines you usually take at home.

## **I brought in my own medicines. What will happen to them?**

- A staff member will check the medicines you brought in with you from home.
- It is best that these medicines are returned home.
- If it is not possible to return your own medicines home, we will lock them away safely. Your medicines will be given back to you when you go home.

## **What happens if the hospital does not have one of my usual medicines?**

We might ask to use your own medicines if one of them is not kept in the hospital.



## DURING YOUR STAY IN HOSPITAL

We explain how we manage medicines safely in hospital.

### **Can I take medicines by myself (unsupervised) while I am in hospital?**

**No.** A nurse or doctor **MUST** always give you your medicines while you are in hospital. You should not take them by yourself (unsupervised).

### **Why can I not take medicines by myself while I am in hospital?**

- The nurse and doctor need to keep a record of the medicines you have been given.
- Your home medicines may have changed while you are in hospital. For example, if you came to hospital because of a bleed, the doctors might decide to stop the blood thinner you take at home.

## **What happens when a nurse/ doctor gives me a medicine?**

Every time you get a medicine in hospital, the nurse or doctor will check:

- Your hospital prescription booklet. This is to make sure the medicine is prescribed for you.
- If you have any allergies. This is to make sure we don't give you a medicine you are allergic to.
- Your hospital wrist band. This is to make sure we are giving the medicine to the right patient.
- Your name and/or date of birth. This is to make sure we are giving the medicine to the right patient.

All of these checks are for your safety.

## **Why do some of the nurses wear blue aprons?**

If a nurse is wearing a blue apron, it means that they are giving patients medicines. If possible, please do not disturb a nurse while they are giving medicines.

## **What if I have started a new medicine?**

If you have started a new medicine in hospital, make sure to ask a staff member (pharmacist, nurse or doctor) about the new medicine. **Page 10** lists some examples of questions to ask.



## GOING HOME FROM HOSPITAL

Leaving the hospital (discharge) can be a very busy time for you.

Below we explain about your discharge prescription.

### Discharge Prescription

- If you need a prescription, it will be written for you before you are discharged.
- Bring this prescription to a pharmacy.
  - o It helps to go to your regular pharmacy as they will be familiar with your usual home medicines.
  - o If you leave hospital later in the day, you might need to go to a 'late night' pharmacy near the hospital. Ask a staff member for more information.
- Unfortunately, public hospitals in Ireland cannot supply medicines on discharge.

## Some useful tips before discharge

Before you are discharged, make sure you or your carer:

**KNOW** all of the medicines that have been prescribed for you - including any changes to your home medicines.

**CHECK** that you know the dose of each medicine and when to take it.

**ASK** a staff member if you have any questions regarding your discharge medicines.

Look at Page **8, 9 & 10** for some examples of questions you might like to ask a nurse, doctor or pharmacist.

# Questions to ask in hospital about my usual home medicines...

(Patients or carers can write in the boxes below)

Have you **stopped** or **changed** any of the medicines I was taking at home since I came to hospital? If so, why?

| Name of medicines<br><b>STOPPED</b> in hospital | Why? |
|---|------|
|   |      |
|   |      |
|   |      |
|   |      |
|   |      |
|   |      |
|   |      |



| Name of medicines<br><b>CHANGED</b> in hospital | Why? |
|---|------|
|   |      |
|   |      |
|   |      |
|   |      |
|   |      |
|   |      |
|   |      |

## Questions to ask a staff member about new medicine

|  | Drug 1 | Drug 2 | Drug 3 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|
| What is the name of the new medicine started in hospital?                                  |        |        |        |
| What is this new medicine for?   |        |        |        |
| How long will I have to take this new medicine for?  |        |        |        |
| How often do I need to take this medicine?   |        |        |        |
| Does this medicine require any monitoring or blood tests?                                  |        |        |        |
| Are there any medicines I should not take with this new medicine, for example painkillers? |        |        |        |
| What are the side effects of this new medicine?  |        |        |        |
|  |        |        |        |

## How many medicines I have started in hospital ...

| Drug 4 | Drug 5 | Drug 6 | Drug 7 | Drug 8 |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
|        |        |        |        |        |
|        |        |        |        |        |
|        |        |        |        |        |
|        |        |        |        |        |
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