

# medication

The combinations of medications you take are individual to you. Understanding your medications is part of your role in managing your daily life which will enable you to lead a balanced and healthy lifestyle.

The following will help you with your self-management:

## Essentials

- It is important that you know information about your medications such as:
  - The number of tablets you need to take every day
  - The meal/eating restrictions and limitations (i.e. whether your medication is required to be taken with food or on an empty stomach)
  - The frequency/timing of dosage (i.e. how often you need to take your medication and at what times of the day or night)
  - The possible development of side effects from your medications
- Medications help to slow the damage to your immune system and allow you to continue your normal daily life
- Missing a dose of your medication means that it may not work as effectively. Make sure you are familiar with what to do if you miss a dose. Discuss this with your medical or health professional
- Do not take any out of date medication. The expiry date can be found on the box/bottle of medication
- Store your medication in the appropriate way so that it can work effectively such as in the fridge, out of the sun or heat, or in a cool, dry place

## Side Effects

- There are many different side effects that you may experience from medications. Some of the most common are:
  - Diarrhoea
  - Fatigue and Tiredness
  - Nausea
  - Headache
  - Insomnia
- You may experience some but not all of the side effects listed with each medication
- Some medications can interact with the working process of other medications,

vitamins and supplements, as well as with illegal drugs. If you are taking anything else, discuss this with your medical or health professional

- **Do not miss doses or stop taking your medication if the side effects are too much to handle, first talk to your medical or health professional about other options such as changing medications**

## Daily Routine

- Create a schedule for yourself listing the different types of medications, when you need to take them, with what food, how many tablets at a time, and any other important information (refer to Time link). This can help you to plan your day and give you reminders to make sure you are taking your medication correctly
- Use a dosette box as an alternative to a medication schedule. A dosette box allows you to keep a day or weeks supply of tablets. It has compartments for different times of the day so that at breakfast on Monday you take out the tablets in that section and you continue for each meal time every day until the dosette box is empty. Learn to use your dosette box correctly and consult your medical or health professional for further information
- Plan your meals for the day so that you know what medication needs to be taken after or before a meal or what medication needs to be taken in between meals on an empty stomach
- It is important to choose a method that fits into your daily routine so that you can have confidence and independence in managing your illness and improve your well being
- Plan ahead so that you have sufficient amounts of your medications. This means having a new box/bottle of medication or a prescription so that you do not run out completely when you finish your current box/bottle

### Making it real - ideas to try:

- Be sure to take your medication in the prescribed dose and frequency
- Side effects vary from person to person but it is important to take control of the side effects and speak to your medical or health professional about how to manage them and about what medication is best for you. Do not ignore side effects
- Manage your side effects by changing your diet or by being careful about what foods you eat (refer to Nutrition link and talk to your medical or health professional). For example if you have nausea, eat small meals that you can tolerate
- Take your medication at the same time every day so that you build it into your daily routine, for example after a TV show, before you have a shower, or after you take the dog for a walk
- If you miss a dose, do not take double the amount of tablets next time, just take your next scheduled dose
- Ask your medical or health professional if you are uncertain about any information relating to your medications
- Knowing the name of your medications and what they do will help you to adhere to your daily routine
- Talk to your medical or health professional if you want to have a break from your medication or if you are going away so that you can plan ahead
- Set alarm clocks to remind you to take your medication
- Write notes to remind yourself to take your medication
- Keep a diary and write down such things as how you feel in relation to your medication, the side effects you are experiencing (as some may come and go), and what you find difficult or easy about taking the medication
- Use the diary to also write down appointments
- Be prepared and plan ahead. If you are going out for the day make sure you know how to cope with your side effects. Have medicine to combat them, know where the toilets are and pace yourself (refer to Energy link)
- Talk to friends, family, doctors, health professionals, counsellors, and peers for support

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*The information provided assists in self-management and is intended as recommendations only. For more information please see your medical or health professional.*



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