

Managing Your Medicines








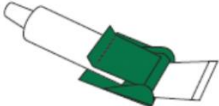
Are you or someone you care for struggling to remember to take your medicines? Are you or someone you care for having difficulty getting your medicine out of the packaging?

The following information will help you find out about the options that may make your medicine easier to take.

Your local pharmacy may not be able to offer every option and some may incur a charge (this list is not exhaustive).

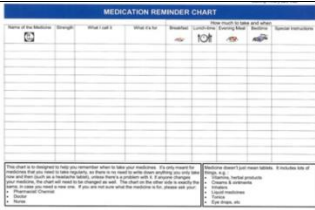
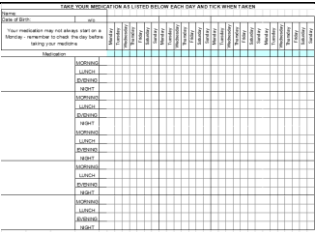



Speak to your local pharmacy for further information on any problems you are having.

Struggling to open containers/use medicines

Large Containers		These have a larger lid to help with grip when opening containers.
Easy opening bottle tops		Non child resistant tops can be easier to open for those having difficulty opening containers.
Winged Caps		Non child resistant tops with a wing attachment that is easier to open.
A Pill Press		A device that helps medicines to be pushed out of blister packs (the wrong end of a teaspoon can also be used to do this).
A Pill Punch		A device that helps medicines to be pushed out of blister packs.
Eye drop dispensers		To help apply eye drops. Various options. Usually need to buy.
Inhaler aids		Aids to help you grip, trigger or twist an inhaler device.
Medication tube squeezers		Helps to squeeze content out of tubes and also reduces waste.

Oral syringes		Can make it easier to measure liquid medicines accurately from medicines bottles.
Lotion Applicators		Helps to apply creams in hard to reach places.

Memory Problems

Medication Reminder Charts		A paper-based chart to summarise medicines, what they are for and when to take them.
Medication tick charts		A paper-based chart where you record when you have taken your medicine.
Reminder alarms e.g. watch alarms, phone apps		Electronic devices to help you to remember to take medication.
Simplify Medicines taking		Speak to your GP or pharmacist as it may be possible to simplify your medication regime e.g., change to a once a-day medicine.
Downloadable Apps	Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medsafe Pill Reminder • MyTherapy Medication Reminder & Pill Tracker • Pill Reminder All In One 	There are a number of free apps that you can download and use to help to remind you to take your medicines.
Multi-compartment Compliance Aid (MCA)		See below for more information on the pros and cons of this type of system.

Visual Impairment

Large print labels	ONE to be taken THREE times a day	A pharmacy should be able to do this for you
Large diagrams or pictures		You can draw/attach pictures onto the box to show when a tablet is to be taken e.g., sun for the morning or moon for at night.
Magnifying glass		You can buy a magnifying glass to help you read labels and packaging.
Braille		Ask your pharmacy about the options they have for supplying your tablets with Braille.
Talking/audio labels		You can buy these devices to read the label out loud for you.
Colour coding		Coloured dots can be stuck on your medicines to show what they are for. A colour coded key is also needed if this method is used.
Tactile identifiers		You can attach something to the tablet box e.g., elastic band, staples, tear in the lid of the box.

Inclusion in this list does not imply endorsement by the Medicines Optimisation Team (NNICB)

Multi-Compartment Compliance Aids (MCAs)

An MCA is a general term for a container used for storing medicines, which is divided into compartments by day and/or time. There are many styles available. They are sometimes referred to as a monitored dosage system (MDS) or dosette box.

They are often thought to be the preferred choice when someone is having difficulties managing their medicines but this is often not the case and there are many more options available that may be better suited.



MCAs should not be used to make it easier for someone else to give the medicines to you e.g., a carer or family member.

Pros

- Can help when having to take lots of medicines.
- Can give reassurance that the medicines have been taken.

Cons

- Community pharmacies do not have to supply medicines in an MCA. If they agree to do this, they may charge for providing this service. A small number of people may qualify for a free MCA following an assessment - ask your community pharmacy about this.
- Not all medicines are suitable for supplying in an MCA. If you have some medicines in an MCA and some that are not this could create more confusion and missed medicines. For example, medicines that are outside of the MCA may be forgotten.
- MCAs have fixed times of day for when medicines are taken. Some medicines may not fit in with these times.
- It is difficult for people to follow special instructions the different medicines may have. For example, medicines to be taken on an empty stomach or with food are often in the same section.
- Medicines within an MCA are taken out of the manufacturers packaging. This may affect the medicines stability so that the medicine does not work as well as it should.
- Putting more than one medicines together makes each medicine difficult to tell apart. This could be a problem if your health care professional changes a medicine and may lead to all the medicines in the box having to be replaced with significant costs to the NHS.
- Even if only one medicine is the MCA is changed the whole box may have to be replaced. This can mean a new prescription is needed for all the medicines in the box and it may take longer for the change in medicine to happen.
- Extra plastic packaging which can affect the environment.

Adapted from 'Managing Medication – A guide to assist health & social care workers in conversations with people (West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership)