

## Drug use

If you have been prescribed an alternating dose of medication to be taken on ODD and EVEN days, take the EVEN day doses on even-numbered days of the month (e.g. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, etc.) and the ODD day doses on odd-numbered days of the month (e.g. 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> ... 31<sup>st</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup>, etc.). This means two ODD days in a row would occur whenever a month ends on an odd-numbered day.

Jan	28 (Mon)	Even
	29 (Tue)	Odd
	30 (Wed)	Even
	31 (Thurs)	Odd
Feb	1 (Fri)	Odd
	2 (Sat)	Even
	3 (Sun)	Odd

It is commonly misunderstood that the oral medications are best taken with meals. In fact, not all medications are suitable to be taken with meals. Medications that cause stomach upset are best taken with meals. Those whose absorption may be interfered by food should be taken on an empty stomach. You should always read the instructions on the label before taking the medications. Medications can be taken with or without meals unless it is specified on the label.

In general, take before meals (or on empty stomach) means taking the medication at least one hour before or two hours after meals; take with or after meals (or on full stomach) means taking the medication within 30 minutes after meals.

If you are unsure when to take the medications, you can refer to the following recommendations:

- Once a day - at the same time every day
- Twice a day - every twelve hours
- Three times a day - every six to eight hours
- Four times a day - every four to six hours

Medications should only be taken with water unless specified. Other beverages such as tea, soft drinks, soy milk, coffee, milk, grapefruit juice may interact with the drug and affect its therapeutic effect, thus they are not recommended.

## Precautions on medication use

Use the missed dose as soon as you remember. Skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your next scheduled dose.

Do not double the dose.

## Other precautions

- Discard medications that have expired or are no longer required.
- Inappropriate use of medications may have negative impact on your condition.
- Do not share medications with other people. The medications may not be suitable for others even if the symptoms are similar.

Drugs can treat diseases but can also cause side effects. Minor illnesses such as mild constipation and indigestion, etc., may not need medications. Instead, they may be managed by lifestyle modifications. E.g.:

- Have a balanced diet
- Drink sufficient water
- Exercise regularly
- Get adequate rest
- Maintain a relaxed and positive attitude
- Quit smoking and limit alcohol consumption

## “TouchMed” Mobile Application

You may download the Hospital Authority (HA) Mobile Application “TouchMed” through App Store or Google Play to obtain information on the medications dispensed from HA hospital / clinic pharmacy. Select ‘My Medication’ in the app to scan the barcode on the right side of a drug label issued by a HA hospital / clinic pharmacy, information including drug name, main indications and possible side effects of the drug will be instantly displayed. “TouchMed” also provides you with general medication tips.



Aim the camera lens at the barcode on right side of drug label for scanning



**For any queries, please seek advice from your doctor, pharmacist or other healthcare professionals.**

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**Your participation is essential to effective medication therapy**

**(Information and advice on drug allergy and drug taking)**



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醫院管理局  
HOSPITAL  
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## Important factors for an effective medication therapy:

- Doctors' diagnosis and prescription.
- Pharmacists' roles in quality assurance and provision of counseling.
- More importantly, "Your participation".

"Your participation" is one of the most important factors in effective medication therapy.

## How should you participate in medication therapy

- Understand how your medications work, the dosage, directions of use, precautions and common side effects.
- During follow-up visits, your doctor may adjust the medication, dosage and frequency according to your condition. Instruction should be read carefully upon collecting your medications and use them as directed. If you have any questions about your medication, including change in appearance of the medication from that previously taken, please consult your pharmacist for advice.
- If you have any difficulty in taking the medication or experience any side effects, please consult your doctor or pharmacist.

**Do not stop using the medications or change the dose or frequency unless directed by your doctor. Otherwise, it may affect your condition.**

During follow-up visits, please inform your doctor or pharmacist the followings:

**If you...**

1. attend follow-up appointments in other hospitals or clinics.
2. are using other medications, including health supplements, Traditional Chinese Medicines, Proprietary Chinese Medicines and over-the-counter medications (there is chance of drug interaction which may increase

the side effects / toxicity, or reduce the therapeutic effects of the medication). You may bring your current medications with labels to the attention of healthcare professionals for their reference.

3. have history of drug allergy. Please record the name of the drug that caused the allergic reaction and inform the doctor or pharmacist.
4. are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breastfeeding.

## What is Drug Allergy

Drug allergy is the allergic reactions caused by some medications which trigger our immune system.

Drug allergy may generate response at different levels. Most allergies are mild and localised, for example, itchiness, or swelling of the lips and around the eyes. In most case, they would clear up once the medication is stopped.

However, severe reactions can occasionally occur. Anaphylaxis is an extreme form of allergic reaction. It can cause swelling of the throat, breathing problems and collapse, and can be life-threatening. Drugs commonly associated with anaphylaxis include antibiotics (e.g. penicillin) and painkillers especially non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) (e.g. aspirin). Another type of severe reaction, known as severe cutaneous adverse reactions (SCARs), presents as blisters and necrosis of skin and mucous membranes, can be complicated and fatal. A number of drugs have been implicated as the possible causes of SCARs, including antiepileptic drugs (e.g. carbamazepine), gout medication (e.g. allopurinol), antiretroviral drug (e.g. abacavir). You should stop the medication and seek medical advice immediately when these severe reactions occur.



Severe Cutaneous Adverse Reactions (SCARs)

Some allergic reactions occur within minutes after drug administration, while others can take days or even weeks to develop. One may experience different types of allergic reactions depending on the genetic variation, the culprit drug and medical histories. If you experience any drug allergies, please record the drug name and inform your doctor and pharmacist.

## Pharmacist's advice

### Drug dispensing label

The label contains the drug name, dosage, direction of use, indication (if applicable), precautions (if applicable), patient name, dispensing date and quantity. Before taking the medication, you should read the label and follow its instructions. You should also keep the label in case you need to show it to healthcare professionals.



## Drug storage

- Store in a cool, dry place and away from direct heat and light. Medications are usually stored at room temperature. Unless specified on the label, medications should not be stored in refrigerators.
- Keep out of reach of children.
- Store medications in the original container. Do not mix different medications in the same container, except when pill organiser is used. This will reduce the chance of using the wrong medications.
- Store medications in a properly labelled container so that healthcare professionals or family members understand what medication you are taking.

## Drug dosage

Some tablets may need to be split for specific doses. You are advised to use the pill cutter for tablet splitting. It is recommended to split the required dose upon administration and not a large amount at once as the split tablets are more perishable.