

Patient Information Leaflet

Optimising safe and appropriate medicines use

This leaflet is to help you understand why your doctor is reviewing the medicines you take to check they are still appropriate to treat your conditions.

Medicines are prescribed to treat symptoms or diseases. When a medicine is prescribed for you, you should be given information on possible side effects, how long to take it for and when to stop taking it.

For each of the medicines you are taking, you should know which of the following applies:

- The medicine should only be taken for a specific number of days to treat a particular condition, for example, antibiotics to treat a bacterial infection.
- The medicine may need to be continued for a number of weeks or months and then stopped when symptoms are reduced or the disease is under control, for example, iron tablets for anaemia.
- For conditions, like asthma, diabetes and high blood pressure you may have to keep taking your medicines every day to keep the signs and symptoms of the disease under control.

It is good practice for your doctor(s) to review the medicines you are taking and check that you are taking the medicine, it is treating the condition and not causing any side effects.

Your doctor may suggest stopping a medicine because –

- Your health or a particular condition has improved or changed and it is no longer needed.
- The side effects outweigh the benefits and they are making you feel unwell.
- You have chosen not to take the medicine.
- You are not able to take the medicine.
- Other treatments which do not involve medicines can be used instead.

Your doctor should involve you in any decision about your medicines. The decision to start or stop a medicine should be shared between you and your doctor and be based on your individual clinical needs, priorities and values.