

## Tips for managing your medication

Some people experience difficulties taking medications prescribed by their doctor. This could be due to issues relating to memory, confusion, reduced vision or lack of dexterity.

This information sheet covers a range of ideas and assistive devices to assist people to overcome these difficulties.

### Safety first

Keep medications in a safe, secure place away from children. This place also needs to be easily accessible for the person taking the medication.

Have a card, chart or list of medications which clearly states what tablets are taken, how much and when, and shows the names of your doctor and pharmacist. Keep it on the fridge, next to the phone or where it can be easily found by you and others.

Know what to do if you miss a dose – check with your doctor or pharmacist.

#### Things to consider

Check with your pharmacist:

- Before crushing or cutting pills/tablets
- Before storing pills together or storing medications out of their original packaging
- To see whether medications need to be stored in the fridge

### Strategies to help you remember to take medication

- Make a chart/calendar with the name of your medication, the dose, and when to take it.
- Put reminder notices on the fridge or next to the kettle.
- Have a routine which helps to remind you in the morning and/or in the evening.
- Leave yourself a note or set an alarm on the clock, mobile phone or computer.
- Choose an alarm system that can be set to alert you at different times of the day. Some alarms can be set to beep or vibrate. They may also have a display which lights up. Some include pill/tablet compartments and others, e.g. watches, only give time alerts.
- A battery operated talking clock with recordable voice memos can provide up to four alarms daily or weekly. There are recorded messages at alarm times.



## Suggestions if you have difficulty opening packets, containers or pill bottles

- A specialised assistive device may help you to open a container or packet.



- A friend could be asked to get pills/tablets out for you and put them in a box or special pill/tablet container.
- A pill/tablet reminder box can be used. One-day boxes may have 1, 2, 4 or 8 separate compartments. 7-day dispensers hold all the pills/tablets needed for a week. Each day has compartments for 2 or 4 doses per day. Most pill/tablet boxes have see-through lids so you can check that pills/tablets have been taken.



- Some pill/tablet boxes have an alarm which can be set off up to 8 times a day.



- Some pill/tablet dispensers dispense medication when an alarm is activated.



- Receiving medication in blister-packaging, e.g. a Webster-pak, which holds pills/tablets for a week, can be arranged with your pharmacist. Pills/tablets for each day are sealed in separate compartments (for breakfast, lunch, dinner and bedtime) and information identifying medications and dosage times for each, is displayed on the packaging.



## Other assistive devices you may find useful

- A handheld plastic device can be used to cut tablets in half. It features a blade within the lid for cutting, and a compartment at the front of the container to store pills/tablets. There is a cylindrical shaped splitter with a plastic base and a transparent cover that encloses a stainless steel blade. A built-in magnifier shows the pills/tablets at double the normal size to assist with locating the middle indented mark for cutting the pill in half.



- Multi-purpose devices are designed to crush a pill or tablet into a very fine powder. They also feature a stainless steel blade to cut pills/tablets in half, are able to store pills/tablets, and can be used as a drinking cup. Larger portable battery operated or mechanical crushers are available for people who have difficulty using smaller devices.



- A plastic cup that has a compartment near the lip to hold a pill/tablet is designed to assist people to overcome difficulties in swallowing pills. When the cup is tilted for drinking, the pill is washed down.



- A plastic device that acts as a lever-aid can be used with a variety of inhalers used for management of the symptoms of respiratory conditions such as asthma.



- A range of lightweight plastic eye drop dispensers assist with the application of eye drops.



## Contact ILC Tas for more information



Ring **1300 885 886** to speak to a health professional



Visit our website [www.ilctas.asn.au](http://www.ilctas.asn.au) or email us at [ilc@ilctas.asn.au](mailto:ilc@ilctas.asn.au)



Make an appointment to visit our centre at 275 Wellington Street, South Launceston



Ring us to find out when we will be visiting your area

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