

Pharmacist:

Where your point of healthcare begins

Proper use of medication is important to ensure quick recovery and efficiency. Visit your local pharmacist for more information on the proper usage of medication.

Q: There are many types of medication for various ailments and symptoms. Why do some drugs need a doctor's prescription while others are available over-the-counter (OTC)?

A: Although medication can help relieve ailments and improve our health, they can also jeopardise our well-being if aren't used properly. To help you get the best out of your medication, talk to your local pharmacist.

Your pharmacist can help you with the following:

- The name of the medication and what it does;
- The strength and dosage. Always follow the recommended dosage. More is not necessarily better. At times, taking too much can be lethal. On the other hand, taking too little may delay recovery;
- When to take the medication. Knowing the right time, frequency and how long to continue taking the medication is important. Stopping medication too soon can harm your health instead of improving it, especially if you are taking antibiotics;
- Instructions on how to take the medication, such as, before a meal or after a meal;
- What to do if you miss a dosage;
- What to do if you experience an allergic reaction;
- Any possible side-effects or long-term effects and how to counter them;
- Avoiding unwanted interactions. Certain food, drink, herbal supplements and drugs may interact adversely with the medication;



- Checking to see if medication is safe to be taken during pregnancy or while breastfeeding; and
- How to store medication so that it remains in good order and effective.

If you have any issues on compliance, such as forgetting when to take medication or taking the wrong dosage due to complicated instructions, do pop by your local pharmacy and consult your pharmacist.

Useful advice

A pharmacist's guidance is especially useful when selecting OTC medication – which you can buy without a doctor's prescription.

Consult one if you need help to understand what you read on the product label. The label contains all the vital information, such as, dosage amount, frequency, and any possible interaction with other drugs, herbs and supplements if taken together.

Take note of the expiry date. An expired product would be reduced in efficacy, and may not provide a cure against the medical problem.

Certain products such as eye drops are safe to use for a short period of time after they are opened, even though the expiry date may not be due.

Also, take note that product is registered with the Ministry of Health. All medications, including OTC and even health supplements and traditional medicines are required to be registered with the Ministry of Health and bear a registration number MAL followed by some numbers. **OH!**

