

Medicine aids to help you manage your medicines

This information gives examples and suggestions and of aids that could help with your medication routine. You may need to buy these aids - there are examples of suppliers who sell medicine aids at the end of this leaflet. If you have questions, speak to the staff member who provided this leaflet.

You must always keep your medicines out of reach and sight of children.

Help to remember to take your medicines

If you sometimes forget to take your medicines, aids could help remind you.

Telephone or text reminders

Telephone or text reminders from family, friends or carers may help. Sometimes you can get reminders through telecare companies.



Reminder systems

You may think about having a new routine to help you. This might be:

- Putting your medicines somewhere you can see it, such as near your toothbrush or kettle
- Taking your medicines with meals or other daily activities
- Using fridge stickers or magnets

Smart phone medication reminders

There are lots of medicines reminder smart phone applications ('apps') available. Most apps use reminder notifications to help you to take your medicines at specific times of day.

Search online for 'Smart Phone medication reminders'



Talking reminder clocks

These may help you by reminding you to do tasks such as taking your medicines. Some can be programmed with voice reminders from familiar voice. Some clocks may show reminders. **Search online for 'Talking reminder clock'**



Medicines advice

Pharmacists can give advice about medicines. This includes how to use your medicines, worries about side effects or any other questions you have. If they cannot help you themselves, they can refer you to a GP or other health professional.

If you are prescribed a medicine to treat a long-term condition for the first time, you may be able to get help and advice about your medicine from your pharmacy. This is through a free scheme called the new medicine service (NMS).



Medication review

You can speak to your GP surgery about a medication review. During a medication review you may want to talk about:

- fitting medicines into your daily routine
- cutting down or stopping medicines you have been taking for a long time
- knowing what your medicines are for



Audible/vibrating alarm watches

These watches let you programme alarms that vibrate or make a noise.

They may be helpful if you have difficulty hearing.
Search online for 'Audible/vibrating alarm watch'



Talking watches

These watches allow several alarms to be set. They might help if you have difficulty with seeing or are blind.

Search online for 'Talking watch'



Medication reminder charts

Medication reminder charts may help by telling you about your medicines such as what your medicines are for and how to take them. Examples of reminder charts can be found online. You could use a chart to write out your medicines and tick when you have taken them. A family member or friend may be able to help you with this. Some pharmacies may produce charts for you. You may be charged for this service.

Search online for 'Medication reminder charts'

Medicines Reminder Tick Chart																																				
My name is _____			This month is _____			This year is _____																														
 Morning medicines																																				
Medicine	Date																																			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31					

Pill bottle top with indicator and alarms

These timers have a number of daily alarms that tell you the last time the bottle was opened.

Search online for 'Pill bottle top with indicator and alarms'



Pill organisers

The NHS recommends that medicines should remain in the original packaging or container. Pharmacies are no longer recommended to fill multi-compartment compliance aids. If you're assessed as someone who may benefit a pill organiser, and this outweighs the risks, speak to a pharmacy professional to check that your medicines are suitable to be placed into a different container.

There are several types available with a number of compartments for one weeks' worth of your medicines. These are available from local stores, pharmacies and online - **search for 'Pill organiser'**. Examples may include:



Weekly pill organisers

You can fill a weekly pill organiser, or you can get a relative or friend to help. These help you to keep in control of your medicines and make any changes if your medicines change.



Automatic medication dispensers

You can fill an automatic medication dispenser. These can be programmed to alarm and open sections at certain times of the day. You might find that they can sometimes be complicated to use and fill. There are several types available for you to purchase.



Search online for 'Automatic medication dispenser'

The NHS does not fund community pharmacists to routinely provide medicines aids except those that meet the Equality Act (EA) 2010 (formerly the Disability Discrimination Act - DDA) requirement on assessment to provide 'reasonable adjustments'.

There may be a charge for a medicines aid and/or for delivery if you are deemed to need this on assessment depending on your pharmacy.



Help to swallow your medicines

Lots of people find it hard to swallow pills. There are things you can try to make it easier - a pharmacist can offer advice. If you have difficulty swallowing your medicines, the information below may be useful. If you also have difficulty swallowing food and drink you must speak to a GP or pharmacist for advice and not follow the advice below.

Medicines advice

A pharmacist can advise you about other versions of your medicine that might be available. For example, you might be able to get it as a liquid or dissolvable tablet. Pharmacists can also advise you about crushing, dividing or opening up tablets and capsules. This should only be done on their advice.

A pharmacist can also check for you if there are better options for you to take.

Pill swallowing techniques

The NHS has videos on ways to help you to swallow medicines. Do not try these techniques if you also have difficulty swallowing food and drink (not just pills) as you might choke. If you have something called dysphagia, which includes difficulty swallowing food and drink, then you must discuss this with your GP.

Search online for 'NHS swallowing pills'
or the link: www.nhs.uk/conditions/problems-swallowing-pills

Tablet cutters and tablet crushers

You must check with a pharmacy professional if it is suitable for you to crush or cut your medicines. You must never crush or cut any medicines without asking a pharmacist as some medicines may not work as well and some may cause you harm. If a pharmacist has confirmed you can cut or crush your medicines, there are several different tablet crushers or cutters. Some are tablet cutters and crushers in one.

Search online for 'Tablet cutter,' 'Tablet crusher' or 'Tablet cutter and crusher'



Help to open containers

There are different aids to help you open containers. You may find that some are available on prescription, free from pharmacies or free from manufacturers.

Difficulty opening blister or foil packs

These aids help you push the tablets through a blister pack or foil pack.

Search online for 'Pill popper'



Some blister packs are peelable. Ask pharmacy staff to check if this is an option for you.

Non-childproof medication lids

These lids can be used on medicine bottles instead of the standard childproof lids. Your pharmacist can supply these.

You must make sure that you store your medicines out of reach of children.

Larger bottles and lids

These can help improve grip for some people. Pharmacy staff must check if a medicine can be used out of its original container.

Use of an alternative container

You can ask pharmacy staff to check if your medicines are suitable to use in a different container.

Pill bottle openers

Pill bottle openers can be useful if you are struggling to grip the bottle. These help give you a firm grip as well as make it easier to push down and twist the bottle lid.

Search online for 'Pill bottle opener'



Help to use different forms of medicines

Difficulty using creams and ointments

There are several aids to help you squeeze creams and gels from tubes. **Search online for 'Medicine tube squeezer'**



Long handled applicators can help you to apply medicines such as creams, lotions, and gels. These may be useful for applying in hard-to-reach areas. **Search online for 'Long handled cream applicator'**

Difficulty using eye drops

You may have difficulty with using eyedrops. This might include dropping them in correct position, squeezing the bottle or other dexterity issues. The most suitable option will depend on what you have difficulty with. It is important to make sure the eye drop aid is correct for the eye drop you use.

Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust has a useful guide on eye drop dispensers. This includes which eye drop bottles each can be used with which aid.

The Royal National Institute of Blind People and Glaucoma UK both have different eye drop dispensers available. Both have helplines that you can call to help you choose the right option.

Search online for 'Eye drop dispenser' or 'Moorfields eye drops compliance aids'



Difficulty using inhalers

If you are having difficulty using your inhalers, speak to a healthcare professional to check what options may be available. They might recommend an alternative inhaler or a spacer if you have difficulty with dexterity or co-ordination.

If there is no suitable alternative, you may be able to use an inhaler aid. Many inhaler aids are available free directly from manufacturers. Some community pharmacies may also have inhaler aids. Check the inhaler aid is compatible with your inhaler with a healthcare professional.

Search online for 'Spacer' or 'Inhaler aid'



Difficulty using liquid medicines

You may be able to get an oral syringe from a pharmacy if you are having difficulty measuring the dose. You can discuss with your healthcare professional if there is a tablet or capsule that you could use instead of the liquid.

Search online for 'Oral syringe'



Help to identify your medicines

Vision impairment can range from general visual decline through to blindness. There are a range of different aids that may support those with impaired eyesight.

Magnifying glass

You can ask an optometrist for a suitable magnifying glass.
You can also get these online.



Search online for 'Magnifying glass'

Large size labels

You can ask your pharmacist for a larger print label to be used on your medicines.

Tactile or coloured markers

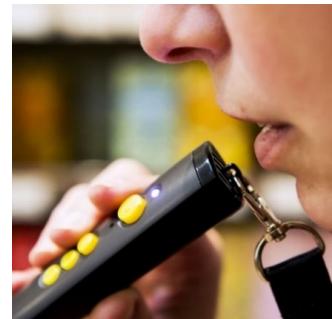
There are options for you to use as tactile markers such as rubber bands, stickers, or coloured dots. You may find raised stickers called 'Bumpoms' useful. Coloured stickers can be helpful. These can be bought from stationary shops.



Search online for 'bumpoms'

Audio Labelling

These devices allow you to record your own labels and play the recordings back.
Search online for 'audio labeller'



Patient Information Leaflets (PIL)

X-PIL is a free service available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can call 0800 198 5000 to listen to and/or request a leaflet in large/clear print, in Braille or on audio CD.

You will need to tell them the name of the medicine and the medicine's product code number.

Search online for 'X-PIL'

Help if you have difficulty reading English

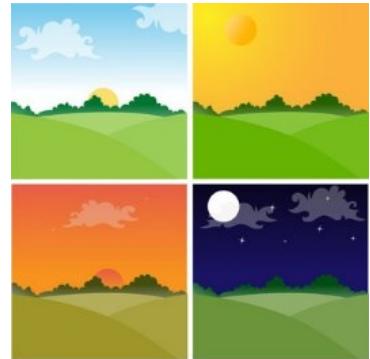
For people who are unable to read English there are some options to help you.

There are options that may help you understand when to take your medicines if you are unable to read labels. You may be able to have someone help translate the label and write down the instructions.

Help if you have difficulty reading any language

For people who are unable to read there are some options to help.

Someone such as a family member or friend may be able to find ways to help you know when and how to take your medicines. They may be able to make a medicines chart which has pictures with times of day may help. Using coloured stickers or marker on the medicines may be another way to help.



Additional support

For further information you can speak to your pharmacist for advice on your medicines, how to manage your medicines and medicines support aids.

You can also speak to the person who gave you this information leaflet.

List of suppliers

A list of suppliers from which you can order or purchase some of the medicine aids detailed above. Other providers of these or similar aids are available. Please note that the inclusion of a specific supplier or product in this information does not imply Trust endorsement or affiliation. We cannot guarantee the quality, accuracy, or availability of any products listed.

Help to remember to take your medicines

Suggestions of where you can buy aids to help you remember to take your medicines:

Complete Care Shop

0300 1000 248

www.completecareshop.co.uk

Items available: Pill organiser, automatic dispenser, talking watches, talking clocks, reminder clocks

Pivotell

01799 550979

www.pivotell.co.uk

Items available: Automatic dispensers, reminders and watches, simple pill boxes

TabTime

www.tabtime.com

01270 767207

Items available: Automatic pill dispensers, reminder watches, pill alarm reminders

Alzheimers Society

0333 366 0035

shop.alzheimers.org.uk

Items available: Reminder clocks and watches

Independence Ltd

01353 667722

www.independence.ltd.uk/daily-living-aids/pills-tablets

Items available: Pill organiser

Talking Watches

0345 0040 100

talkingwatchshop.co.uk/collections/medication-reminders

Items available: Talking watches, medication reminders

Medical Supplies.co.uk

020 7501 0593

www.medicalsupplies.co.uk

Items available: Reminder clocks

Parkinsons UK

0333 0030 523

<https://shop.parkinsons.org.uk/collections/everyday-living-aids-1>

Items available: Pill organisers

Malem Medical Ltd

01159 664440

www.malemmedical.com

Items available: Audible/vibrating alarm watches

Lifemax

01635 588370

www.lifemaxuk.co.uk

Items available: Pill organisers, talking alarm clocks, talking watches

Help to swallow your medicines

Suggestions of where you can buy tablet crushers and cutters

Independence Ltd

01353 667722

www.independence.ltd.uk/daily-living-aids/pills-tablets

Items available to purchase: Tablet crusher, tablet cutter

Complete Care Shop

0300 1000 248

www.completecareshop.co.uk

Items available to purchase: Pill crusher

Help to open containers - Suggestions of where you can buy pill poppers**Complete Care Shop**

0300 1000 248

www.completecareshop.co.uk

Independence Ltd

01353 667722

www.independence.ltd.uk/daily-living-aids/pills-tablets

Parkinsons UK

0333 0030 523

<https://shop.parkinsons.org.uk/collections/everyday-living-aids-1>

Pivotell

01799 550979

www.pivotell.co.uk

Help to use different forms of medicines

Suggestions of where you can buy long handled applicator

Complete Care Shop

0300 1000 248

www.completecareshop.co.uk

Suggested places to order eye drop dispensers or eye drop aids

Glaucoma UK

01233 648 170

<https://glaucoma.uk/shop/>

RNIB - Royal National Institute of Blind People

0303 123 9999

www.rnib.org.uk

Complete Care Shop

0300 1000 248

www.completecareshop.co.uk

Help to identify your medicines

Suggestions of where you can buy aids to help with visual impairment

RNIB - Royal National Institute of Blind People

0303 123 9999

www.rnib.org.uk

BucksVision

01296 487556

www.bucksvision.co.uk

Please remember that this leaflet is intended as general information only. We aim to make the information as up to date and accurate as possible, but please note that it is subject to change. Please therefore always check specific advice on any concerns you may have with your doctor.

How can I help reduce healthcare associated infections?

Infection prevention & control is important to the wellbeing of our patients and for that reason we have infection prevention & control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. Please follow our infection prevention and control guidelines when visiting our healthcare sites. Further information is available on our website.

Patient Advice Sheet

If you would like a copy of this information on audiotape, in large print or translated, please call the Patient Advice Liaison Service on 01296 831120 or email bht.pals@nhs.net

13/13