Independent, not-for-profit and evidence based, NPS MedicineWise enables better decisions about medicines and medical tests. We are funded by the Australian Government Department of Health.
Medicines are something we all take, but too often we take them for granted. We rarely stop to question what medicine we’re taking, why we’re taking it and what’s in it. In fact, we’re often more interested in what’s in our breakfast cereals. Being medicinewise is about asking questions to get the right information.

Did you know?

Having the right information will help you to get the most out of your medicines and to make better health decisions for you and those you care for.
Medicines have benefits, but they also come with potential risks. These risks can increase when people don’t know what medicine they’re taking, why they’re taking it, how to take it, and how it could affect them.

Always follow instructions from your doctor or pharmacist and read the labels and packaging of your medicines carefully.

Taking a medicine incorrectly could mean you end up with too little or too much of it in your body — so you may not get the full benefit, or you could be at greater risk of side effects.
Misadventure

noun \mĭs'əd-vĕn'chər\ to arrive at an unintended location

Medicine mistakes can occur when you go into and come out of hospital, and when you see different health professionals. Tell your health professionals about all of your prescription, over-the-counter and complementary medicines (including herbal, natural, vitamins and supplements). This will help to ensure that the best decisions are made about your health and medicines.

If you suspect a medicine-related side effect you can call the Adverse Medicine Events Line on 1300 134 237.

Hours: Monday-Friday, 9am to 5pm AEST (excluding NSW public holidays).

You can help to prevent mistakes by knowing about all the medicines you take.
Medicine

noun \mĕd’ĭ-sĭn \ any substance used to treat disease or restore and preserve health

Medicines don’t just come on prescription — they also include over-the-counter and complementary medicines (herbal, natural, vitamins and supplements).

Medicines can be bought from a pharmacy, supermarket, health food store or the internet.

For questions about your medicines call the NPS Medicines Line. 1300 MEDICINE (1300 633 424).

Hours: Monday-Friday, 9am to 5pm AEST (excluding NSW public holidays).

Medicines come in many forms, including tablets, liquids, lotions, drops, patches, creams, suppositories and inhalers.
The active ingredient name is shown on the medicine's packaging. If it is a prescription medicine, it is also shown on the label applied by the pharmacist.

Checking the active ingredient every time you get a medicine will help you to prevent double-dosing with another medicine that contains the same active ingredient.

Most medicines have two names: the active ingredient and the brand name.
**Patent**

**noun**  
A right granted by a government to an inventor to use or sell an invention for a period of time.

When a pharmaceutical company develops a new active ingredient it is given a patent, during which no other company can manufacture and sell a medicine containing the same active ingredient.

Once a patent expires, other companies can develop their own version of the medicine — these are known as generic brands.

When your pharmacist offers you an alternative brand, it will always have the same active ingredient as the one on your prescription or in the medicine you usually take.

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**Key Differences**

- **Branded Medicine**
  - Originator Brand
  - Trademarked & Patent Protected
  - Original Product & Chemical
  - Significant investments in:
    - Research & Development
    - Clinical Trials
    - Marketing
  - Approved by TGA

- **Generic Medicine**
  - Different Brand Name
  - Same Manufacturing Standards
  - Different Packaging
  - Same Quality
  - Different Medicine Shapes & Sizes
  - Same Effect in the Body
  - Approved by TGA

*Therapeutic Goods Administration*
Brands

noun \\ brănds \\ a trademark or name that identifies or differentiates a product or manufacturer

Many medicines with the same active ingredient (the chemical that makes the medicine work) are available under several different brands. The medicines work in the same way, but have different brand names and packaging and can also come in different shapes, colours and sizes.

All medicines sold in Australia must meet the same strict standards of quality, safety and effectiveness.
A medicines list helps you stay on top of the information you need to manage your medicines. You’ll know what you need to take, when to take it, how much to take and why.

Health professionals need to know about all the medicines you take so they can help you to make the best decisions about your health.
MedicineList+ app

A medicinewise application for a mobile device

Having up-to-date information about your medicines at all times will help to prevent medicine mistakes.

Download the free MedicineList+ app to make sure you always have your medicines and health information at your fingertips.

You can barcode scan your medicines or select from a pick list, edit and update your profile, set alarms to remind you when to take your medicines, and email or print your medicines list.
Dosage

*noun* \(\text{dō\text-scē} \) \(\text{the amount and frequency of medicine (given or taken)}\)

Small mistakes...little bodies...big problems.
Children's bodies are little, so even small dosing errors can cause them harm. Giving the right dose or amount of a medicine based on a child’s weight and age is important so that they receive the safest and most effective dose.

**Did You Know?**

Weigh yourself on a set of scales while holding your child and then weigh yourself without your child — the difference in the two weights is your child’s weight.
Resistance

noun \ rĭ-zĭstʼəns \ the act of resisting, withstanding or opposing

The development of antibiotics is one of the most important advances of medicine. But now, bacterial infections that were once easily cured with antibiotics are becoming harder to treat. This is due to antibiotic resistance, largely caused by the overuse and misuse of antibiotics. The World Health Organization has warned that antibiotic resistance is one of the biggest threats to global health today.

If we don’t act now, by the time the children in this picture have become adults, we may have run out of effective antibiotics.
Antibiotics are medicines used to treat infections or diseases caused by bacteria. They won’t help treat a cold or flu, because these are caused by viruses.

Don’t expect antibiotics from your doctor for your cold or flu. Some people may need to be prescribed an antibiotic, but only because they are at risk of developing complications from having a cold or flu, such as pneumonia.

If you have a cold or flu — the best thing you can do is to rest, treat your symptoms and let your body fight the infection.
Join the fight

verb  
\[ \text{join the fight} \]  
\( \text{to do battle; an act of commitment, to do one’s bit} \)

Antibiotic resistance is everyone’s problem, but there are simple things we can do to make a real difference. We’re calling on all Australians to join the fight against antibiotic resistance by taking our pledge on Facebook. Thousands of people have — you can too!