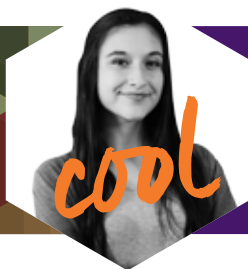


**YOU'RE
NEVER TOO ...**



**TO BE
MEDICINEWISE**

When you're young and starting to take care of your own health and medicines, it's important to know what questions to ask, learn how to be medicinewise as well as who's who in your healthcare.

BE MEDICINEWISE IN THE TEEN YEARS

PUTTING THE 'ME' IN MEDICINE

The teen years are an important time – your body is growing and changing, and you may be spending more time away from home because of study, recreation or work. Taking responsibility for your health often starts around this time as well, so make sure your health management is under control.

Prescription medicines have benefits, but they can also have risks like side effects and interactions. Knowing what medicine you're taking and why, how to take it and how it could affect you, can reduce the chances of a problem and help you be prepared if an unwanted response to a medicine does happen. That's why you should be asking questions about your medicines, reading the labels and packaging carefully and also following any instructions from your doctor or pharmacist.

Some questions you might like to ask your health professional could include:

- ▶ What is this medicine for?
- ▶ Is it OK to use at my age?
- ▶ How should I use and take this medicine?
- ▶ What should I do if I forget to take a dose?
- ▶ What about side effects?
- ▶ Are there any special instructions, like taking it with food?

ABOUT ACTION PLANS

If you use an action plan to help manage a health condition (like asthma or a serious allergy), it's important to keep it up-to-date and on hand. For example, if you have a written Asthma Action Plan, it's important as you get older to make sure it is regularly reviewed and updated by your doctor.

TECHNOLOGY IS YOUR FRIEND

If you are away from home and really must remember to take a medicine, smart phones are a great way to set reminders and alarms. **Download the MedicineList+ app** and ask a parent/carer or health professional to help enter all the correct time and dose details. The app also lets you list current medicines, medical conditions, allergies and emergency contact details.

DR GOOGLE ISN'T REALLY A DOCTOR

We can all find information about medicine from many sources including the internet, the media, even family and friends. But, being medicinewise means being informed and using trustworthy sources of information. Seek out reliable, fact-based sources to help you make your health decisions.

Health professionals, such as doctors, pharmacists and nurses, will usually be your best and most reliable source of information about medicines for your individual situation.

YOUR AGE IS IMPORTANT

Medicines don't just come on prescription – they include over-the-counter medicines from a pharmacy, supermarket or other store, as well as herbal remedies, vitamins and other supplements. Just because they don't come with a script doesn't mean they don't come with risks. Aspirin is a good example. This common pain reliever should not be used by anyone under the age of 16 years. It has been linked to a serious condition called Reye's syndrome that can affect the brain and the liver of children and teenagers younger than 16 years.



Find out more at nps.org.au/be-medicinewise-week



**YOU'RE
NEVER TOO ...**



**TO BE
MEDICINEWISE**

BE MEDICINEWISE IN THE TEEN YEARS

WHO'S WHO IN YOUR HEALTHCARE

Doctors

Doctors prescribe prescription medicines as well as health information and advice; a doctor may be a general practitioner (GP) or a specialist. If you are now old enough to start seeing a doctor on your own, it's important to find someone you trust and feel comfortable with – someone you can ask questions, and who you feel is listening to what you are saying. You might wish to keep attending the same GP practice that you've been going to with your family or to find your own GP. Ask your parent or carer for some background on your personal health history and family history, as the practice will need this information when they start your new file.

You'll need a Medicare card. And make sure you are aware of the payment options. Some doctors bulk bill (so you won't have to pay to see them), others will charge a fee (and you can claim some money back from Medicare). You can apply for a Medicare card when you are 15 years old. You'll need to provide identification, such as a student card or birth certificate, as well as details about the card you are transferring from. You can also choose to stay on your family Medicare card and have a copy made to keep for yourself.

Pharmacists

As you get older, you might start to need to buy over-the-counter medicines like for cold and flu treatment and pain relief at a pharmacy, or have prescriptions filled. Your local pharmacist is a very accessible health professional and a good first port of call for minor ailments. They can help you choose a treatment and advise you how to use it.

WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MEDICINES

- ▶ Doctors
- ▶ Pharmacists
- ▶ Nurse practitioners

ALSO

- ▶ NPS MedicineWise website has loads of useful information about medicines at www.nps.org.au and you can also download the free app at www.nps.org.au/medicinelist-plus
- ▶ If you have any questions about medicines you can call the NPS Medicines Line on 1300 MEDICINE (1300 633 424) from anywhere in Australia for the cost of a local phone call (calls from mobiles may cost more), Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm (AEST)

BE MEDICINEWISE WEEK

All ages & life stages 12-18 OCTOBER 2015

Find out more at nps.org.au/be-medicinewise-week



**NPS
MEDICINEWISE**