



Medications

A guide for patients

All medications, even those you buy without a prescription, from the health food shop or another source, are potent substances. Treat them with care and respect.

Storage

- Many tablets and capsules are brightly coloured and look like lollies which are attractive to children, so it is important to store them in a locked cupboard or out of reach of small children. If they are marked REFRIGERATE, then store them in a secure container in the fridge.
- Sunlight and moisture can destroy many drugs, so store them in a cool, dark cupboard – not over the fridge (too hot), or in the steamy bathroom.
- Keep medications in their original containers, so they can be easily identified with instructions for storage, and expiry dates visible.
- Clean out drug cupboards at least once a year. Return any expired, or unwanted drugs to your pharmacist for disposal.
- Do not store medications with other chemicals.

Side-effects

If any medication appears not to be working, or you experience unpleasant side-effects, ask your doctor to review the medication. Severe side-effects such as difficulty breathing and a rash need urgent attention. Sensitivity to medications taken previously can develop over time.

Understand your medication

It is important for you to know what medications you take, why you take them, their correct dosages, their possible side effects and interactions. If you miss a dose of your medications it is not usually advised to 'double-up' to compensate for a missed dose. If you are unsure, call your GP.

Sharing medications

Do not share your medications with anyone else, even if you have similar symptoms.

Make sure all your medications are compatible

Always tell the pharmacist what other medications you are taking when you are purchasing any additional medication, even over the counter products, or herbal products. All your doctors must know every medication you are taking including health food shop preparations, also any eye/ear drops, or creams/ointments you are using. It is a good idea to have a list available to show a new doctor, or take to hospital.

Pregnancy

If you are breastfeeding, pregnant or intend on getting pregnant, inform your doctor and pharmacist before taking any new medication.

Poisons Hotline 131 126

It is a good idea to put this number in your mobile phone address book.

Obtaining medication supplies after discharge

The hospital will supply up to **30 days** of medications to you on discharge. A letter summarising your admission including your discharge medications will be sent to your GP. You will need to make an appointment with your GP as soon as possible to get prescriptions for your ongoing medications.

It is advisable to go to the same pharmacy, as they will keep your medications in stock and record your expenditure. You may be able to claim for medical expenses on your tax. You should discuss this with an accountant.

Cost

If you have a concession card your medications are subsidised by the government. For details contact Medicare Australia.

If you have a Worker's Compensation or MVIT claim, you will need to supply the pharmacy with the claim number, date of accident, insurance company, and employer's details. By doing this there will be no charge to you for medications, all charges will go direct to the insurance company.

If you have private health insurance you may be eligible for a rebate on certain medications. Discuss with your insurer.

Some common medications for spinal cord injured patients

Medication	Other Names	Purpose	Obtain from	Special Instructions
Baclofen	Stelax 10, Baclo, Clofen, Lioresal	To reduce muscle spasm	GP/ Community pharmacist	Take with food to reduce stomach irritation. Do not rise quickly from sitting or lying positions. May cause drowsiness so take care with activities requiring alertness.
Oxybutynin	Ditropan	To reduce bladder contractions	GP Community pharmacist	May cause drowsiness and increase the effects of alcohol, if affected do not drive a motor vehicle or operate machinery. It may cause a dry mouth, blurred vision, constipation, weight gain, difficulty passing urine, or dizziness.
Pregabalin	Lyrica	For nerve pain	Hospital through spinal/pain clinic.	May cause fatigue, sedation or dizziness – take care with activities requiring mental alertness. See your doctor if these are a concern.
Gabapentin	Neurontin	For nerve pain	Hospital through spinal/pain clinic.	May cause fatigue, sedation or dizziness – take care with activities requiring mental alertness. See your doctor if these are a concern.
Coloxyl and Senna	Docusate 50mg Senna 8mg tablets	Stool softener and stimulant	No script required. Bought from pharmacy.	Take with a glass of fluid. May cause abdominal discomfort.
Coloxyl	Docusate Sodium	Stool softener	No script required. Bought from pharmacy	Take with a glass of fluid. May cause abdominal discomfort.
Paracetamol	Febridol, Panadol, Dymadon, Panamax, Paralgin	For pain	GP/ Community pharmacist	Do not take more than 8 tablets containing paracetamol per day. Some preparations have multiple medications including paracetamol – ask your pharmacist if unsure.

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Amitriptyline	Endep, Tryptanol, Tryptine	For pain, depression, urinary incontinence or to help with sleep	GP/ Community pharmacist	If used for depression it may take a few weeks to reach the full effect. May cause drowsiness and increase the effects of alcohol. If affected do not drive a motor vehicle or operate machinery. It may also cause a dry mouth, blurred vision, constipation, weight gain, difficulty passing urine, or dizziness.
Temazepam	Normison, Temaze, Temtabs	To assist with sleeping difficulties.	GP	May cause daytime drowsiness. If affected take care with tasks requiring concentration. Gradual withdrawal may be necessary after prolonged use or high dose. Drowsiness, dizziness or impaired concentration may occur
Diazepam	Valpam 5, Antenex, Ducene, Valium	For spasm, some kinds of epilepsy or anxiety	GP/ Community pharmacy	May cause drowsiness, so take care with tasks requiring concentration. If therapy is to be ceased, it should be done gradually under medical supervision. May cause balance problems, impaired memory or increased salivation.
Glycerol Suppositories		Mild bowel stimulant and lubricant	GP/ Community pharmacist	To be inserted into the rectum against the rectal wall. Consult your Doctor or Pharmacist if unclear on how to use. A mild strength preparation.
Bisacodyl Suppositories	Durolax	Moderate Bowel stimulant	GP/ Community pharmacist	To be inserted into the rectum against the rectal wall. Stimulates bowel movement. Consult your Doctor or pharmacist if unclear on how to use. A moderate strength preparation.

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Bisacodyl tablets	Bisalax, Duro lax	Moderate Bowel stimulant	GP/ Community pharmacy.	Take with a glass of fluid. May cause abdominal discomfort.
Movicol sachets		Treats constipation	GP/ Community pharmacy.	Dissolve the contents of one sachet in 125mls of water and drink as directed. May cause flatulence, abdominal bloating, and cramping.
Oxycodone capsules	Oxynorm	Fast acting. For moderate to severe pain	Check with own GP	May cause drowsiness, constipation, nausea, vomiting, dry mouth, or itchy skin.
Oxycodone Controlled Release	Oxycontin	Controlled release. For moderate to severe pain	Check with own GP	Swallow the tablet whole, do not crush. May cause drowsiness, constipation, nausea, vomiting, dry mouth, or itchy skin.
Antibiotics		To treat or prevent bacterial infections	GP	Important to take full course. Be sure to check side effects when prescribed. May cause stomach upset.
Viagra	Sildenafil citrate	For erectile dysfunction	See point 1 over page	Do NOT use Glyceryl Trinitrate (GTN spray) if Viagra has been taken in the previous 24 hours and do not take Viagra for at least 48 hours after GTN spray has been taken. For more information on Viagra see the Sexuality section of this manual.
Levitra	Vardenafil	For erectile dysfunction	Not available from FSH	Do NOT use Glyceryl Trinitrate (GTN spray) if Levitra has been taken in the previous 24 hours and do not take Levitra for at least 48 hours after GTN spray has been taken.

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Medication	Other Names	Purpose	Obtain from	Special Instructions
Cialis	Tadalafil	For erectile dysfunction	See point 2 below	Do NOT use Glyceryl Trinitrate (GTN spray) if Cialis has been taken in the previous two days and do not take Cialis for at least 48 hours after GTN spray has been taken.
Prostaglandin (50mg only)	Alprostadil	For erectile dysfunction	Sexual health consultant (FSH) patients only	A fast acting injection. Prolonged erection may occur.

1. If a script is written by the sexual health consultant at Fiona Stanley Hospital and dispensed from the Fiona Stanley Hospital pharmacy, the patient may be eligible for a subsidy. Alternatively, the script can be obtained from their own GP.
2. Not available from Fiona Stanley Hospital (except Veterans Affairs – conditions apply).

Any side effects experienced with the use of any medication should be discussed with your doctor or pharmacist as medication effects vary for each individual.

Contact

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