

Self-administration of medicines and the use of your own drugs

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As a result of government recommendations, The Royal Marsden has introduced an initiative to enable you to self-manage your medication during your hospital stay. This information sheet explains how the programme works and how it can benefit you. Taking part in this programme is not compulsory and the care you receive will not be affected if you forget to bring your medicines to hospital or do not take part.

How does it work?

On admission to hospital, please bring your own medicines from home including prescription medicines in their original packets, herbal, homeopathic and over the counter products that you take regularly. If they are suitable and your hospital doctor wants you to continue taking them, your own medicines will be used for your treatment while you are in hospital. They will be checked by a trained member of nursing or pharmacy staff and then kept in a medicine locker by your bed. Those medicines not suitable for use will be destroyed safely with your consent.

Self-management of your medication

On admission, we will ask if you wish to continue making your own decisions about the management of your medication during your stay, if you are well enough to do so. As you are the person with the most experience in managing your medication, we would encourage you to continue to make your own decisions about your treatment wherever possible.

If you choose not to self-manage during your admission, medical and nursing staff will administer your medication on your behalf. If during your admission, you are not well enough to make your own decisions, for example, if you require sedation, medical and nursing staff will take over the management of your medicines until you are well enough to do so yourself.

If you would like to take responsibility for the management of your own medication, we will ask you to sign a form to confirm this. We will also ask you to keep a record of the medication that you have taken so that medical staff are aware of the decisions you have taken.

Why this is a good idea?

Bringing your own medicines from home enables hospital staff to know exactly which ones you take and to check that they are currently suitable for you. It also helps reduce wastage. If you are responsible for managing your own medication at home, we would like you to continue doing this during your hospital stay.



What happens if I run out of medicines while I'm in hospital?

The hospital pharmacy department will supply you with medicines if you run out during your stay. They will be supplied for your stay in the ward and for you to take home, enabling leaving hospital to be a quicker process. New medicines started by the hospital doctors will also be supplied and explained to you so you can administer them yourself during your admission.

What happens when I go home?

When you go home, you will be supplied with any medicines that hospital doctors want you to continue taking. The pharmacy department will ensure that you have sufficient quantities and a further supply will be made if any medications are running low. After this, you should visit your GP to obtain further supplies of medicines before they run out. While you are in hospital and with your permission, we will remove and safely dispose of any medicines that you no longer need in order to avoid confusion.

What happens next?

Bring all your medicines when you come to hospital, even if you are still unsure about the programme. When you arrive, a nurse will be able to explain this new way of managing your medicines in hospital in more detail and can answer any questions you have.

Points to remember

You will not automatically be put on the programme as some patients may not be suitable to take part and it is not compulsory.

The care you receive during your stay will not be affected in any way if you do not take part in the programme.

On returning home, if you have any questions or concerns about your medication, please call The Royal Marsden where a member of our pharmacy department will be able to help you.

Contact details

The Pharmacy medicines helpline can be accessed via:

The Royal Marsden Macmillan Hotline: 020 8915 6899
(Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm)

