



# Medication safety

## Information sheet

Medication safety for people with dementia mate wareware is essential due to memory loss, confusion, and difficulty following instructions, which can lead to missed doses, overdoses, or harmful drug interactions.

Care partners, family and whānau can play a key role in supporting the person with dementia mate wareware by assisting with medication management, monitoring side effects, and helping to maintain a regular medication schedule. Using tools like pill organisers, medication charts, and reminders can help reduce errors.

Regular reviews with healthcare providers ensure medications remain appropriate as the person's condition changes. Creating a safe and structured environment supports better health outcomes and enhances quality of life.

- Always tell your doctor before stopping your medication and take it as prescribed to ensure you use it safely.
- Inform your health professional if symptoms change or you develop new symptoms/side effects.
- Never share prescribed medications and do not increase doses unless your health professional tells you too.
- It is good to know what you are on (the names of the medications) and why – if you can't remember or have a lot of tablets, ask your pharmacist to print you a list of them and make a note of what they are. This can be helpful to have on hand if you need to go into hospital or call an ambulance.
- It is important that you try to take the medications at the correct time and don't miss doses. If you do forget to take a dose, ask your pharmacist how long afterwards you should take it, or if it's better to miss them and take again the next day.
- If a medication is PRN or as needed, ensure you know what symptoms it is used for and how frequently it can be taken (i.e. maximum dose in a day).

- If you are supporting someone with dementia and you become aware they have missed a number of medications (i.e. several days in a row), ask your pharmacist/health professional for advice.
- **If you or the person you support accidentally takes too much medication – i.e. forget and take more, contact your pharmacist, Healthline or poisons centre for advice (see useful numbers).**
- **Obviously if the person is immediately unwell or unresponsive, call 111 for an ambulance.**

## Useful Numbers

**Healthline:** Freephone 24hrs a day 7 days a week **0800 611 116**

**National Poisons Centre:** Freephone 24hrs a day 7 days a week for help and information if you think that you or a family member have been exposed to a poison: **0800 764 766**