

## Advice to patients

The information given here is designed to help patients in pharmacies understand the medicines they have been given. Please click on the links below for information on 50 commonly used drugs.

These medicines are grouped under the headings in which they appear in the *British National Formulary*. More detailed information on these and other medicines can be obtained from the [British National Formulary](#) website.

The information given here is based on a series of "advice tips" on 50 commonly used drugs, first published in [The Pharmaceutical Journal](#) in 1996-2000. Sets of the "tips" are available for sale as 12x15cm cards, supplied with a ring binder, from Pharmacy Practice Consultants, 12 Firlie Road, Lancing, West Sussex BN15 0NZ. Price: Cards 1-50 + binder £18 UK, £22 elsewhere; cards 26-50 without binder £8 UK, £11 elsewhere (cheques to Pharmacy Practice Consultants).

### 1. Gastrointestinal system

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*Laxatives*  
[Ispaghula](#) husk  
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### 2. Cardiovascular system

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modified release capsules and  
tablets

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[Beclomethasone](#) inhaler

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*Analgesics*  
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(8/500 and 30/500)  
[Co-dydramol](#) tablets  
[Co-proxamol](#) tablets  
[Dihydrocodeine](#) tablets  
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### 10. Musculoskeletal and joint diseases

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*Anti-inflammatory*  
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*Tear deficiency*  
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### 13. Skin

*Topical corticosteroids*  
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cream and ointment

### **Allopurinol tablets**

1. Allopurinol acts to reduce the amount of uric acid in the body. It is mainly used to prevent gout and kidney stones.
2. The tablets should be taken with or after food. Try to take them with a glass of water and at the same time each day.
3. Do not stop taking this medicine without talking to your doctor first. If you suddenly stop, your symptoms could come back.
4. It is important to drink plenty of fluids (not alcohol) while you are taking these tablets.
5. Like all medicines, allopurinol can have some unwanted effects. Rashes are the most common side effect. If you get an unusual skin rash, stop taking the tablets and tell your doctor straight away.

### **Amitriptyline tablets**

1. Amitriptyline is used to treat several conditions, most commonly depression and some types of pain.
2. This medicine takes some time to work fully. You may need to take it for two to four weeks before you feel any better.
3. The tablets can make you drowsy. If you feel drowsy do not drive. Alcohol can make drowsiness worse and is best avoided.
4. Do not stop taking the tablets even if you feel better. If you do want to stop, speak to your doctor first. You may need to reduce the dose slowly.
5. Like all medicines, amitriptyline can have some unwanted effects. Dry mouth and eyes, sweating, constipation, difficulty passing water and blurred vision may occur, but often go away after the first week or so. If the tablets make you feel dizzy or faint when you get up, try to stand up more slowly and count to 20 before walking. If these or any other side effects are persistent or troublesome, tell your doctor.
6. Problems can occur if amitriptyline is taken with some other medicines. Are you taking any other prescribed medicines or medicines you have bought?

### **Amlodipine tablets**

1. Amlodipine is used to treat high blood pressure and chest pain (angina).
2. The tablets are taken once each day with a glass of water. Try to take them at the same time each day.
3. Do not stop taking the tablets without speaking to your doctor first. Your condition could get worse if you stopped suddenly.
4. Like most medicines, amlodipine can have some unwanted effects. These include flushing, headache and dizziness. Ankle swelling may occur, particularly if you sit down for a long time. If you do sit for much of the day, it is a good idea to rest your feet on a stool. If you keep taking the tablets these effects may go away within a week or so, but if any side effects are persistent or troublesome tell your doctor.

### **Amoxicillin capsules**

1. Amoxicillin is an antibiotic used to treat infections. It is a type of penicillin. If you are allergic to penicillin, do not take any of this medicine without first talking to your doctor/dentist.
2. Try to space the doses evenly through the day - one dose every eight hours if you are taking a dose three times a day.
3. It is important that you complete the course of treatment even if you feel better quickly.
4. Food does not affect this medicine, so you can take it with food or on an empty stomach.
5. Most medicines sometimes have side effects. With amoxicillin, you may have mild diarrhoea or indigestion. If you have bad diarrhoea, skin rashes, itching, wheezing or difficulty breathing tell your doctor straight away.
6. For women of child-bearing age Amoxicillin can reduce the effectiveness of some contraceptive pills. You may need to use an additional form of contraception while you are taking it.

### **Aspirin 75mg dispersible tablets**

1. These tablets "thin the blood" so it does not clot too easily. This helps to prevent strokes and heart attacks.
2. Aspirin 75mg are usually taken once daily, preferably at the same time each day. The tablets can be chewed or mixed in a glass of water.
3. This medicine sometimes causes indigestion. Taking the tablets with or just after food will help prevent this. If indigestion (stomach pain) is severe or prolonged you should contact your doctor.
4. A few people are allergic to aspirin - this is more common in people who have asthma. Although unlikely, difficulty in breathing and skin rashes can occur. If this happens, you should stop taking the tablets and contact the doctor straight away.
5. Some medicines you can buy contain aspirin. You should not take any other medicines containing aspirin with this medicine. If you are in any doubt ask your pharmacist or your doctor.

### **Atenolol tablets**

1. Atenolol tablets are used to treat several conditions, most commonly high blood pressure, chest pain (angina) and heart problems.
2. It is important to keep on taking this medicine unless your doctor tells you to stop. If you suddenly stopped taking the tablets, your condition could worsen even though you might feel well.
3. Some people who have respiratory problems, such as asthma or bronchitis, should not take atenolol. Have you had any of these?
4. A few people have side effects with atenolol, such as feeling weak or tired, having cold hands and feet, vivid dreams or trouble sleeping. These symptoms may go away; if they persist or are troublesome tell your doctor. If you have difficulty breathing, contact the doctor straight away.
5. Some medicines you can buy for coughs, colds and hayfever can cause problems with these tablets. Ask your pharmacist or doctor before you take anything else.

### **Beclomethasone inhaler**

1. This inhaler helps prevent asthma attacks. It must be used regularly otherwise it will not work.
2. If you have an attack of breathlessness, this inhaler will not help you. If your breathing worsens or you start wheezing you should tell a doctor straight away.
3. Do not take more doses or stop using the inhaler without talking to your doctor first.
4. Some people get a sore throat or become hoarse after using this inhaler. Rinsing your mouth with water or cleaning your teeth after using the inhaler helps avoid this.
5. Inhalers can be difficult to use. Read the instructions carefully. If you have problems your pharmacist may be able to help, or there are other types of inhaler which you may find easier to use.

### **Bendrofluazide tablets**

1. Bendrofluazide tablets are often called "water" or "fluid" tablets, or "diuretics." They work by increasing the amount of urine you produce.
2. When you first start to take the tablets you will probably need to go to the toilet more often, but you will notice this less once you have been taking them for a while.
3. It is best to take the tablets in the morning so you do not need to get up in the night to go to the toilet.
4. Some medicines you can buy (such as cold and hay fever remedies) should not be taken with these tablets. Make sure you ask your pharmacist or doctor before you take anything else.
5. Like all medicines, this one can have some unwanted effects. If you feel light-headed when you get up, try to stand up more slowly and count to 20 before walking. Tell your doctor if you become very thirsty, weak, tired or confused.

### **Betamethasone valerate cream and ointment**

1. Betamethasone is used to reduce inflammation of the skin, making it less red and itchy.
2. A thin layer is usually smoothed gently into the affected skin once or twice a day. Unless you have been told to by the doctor, do not use it on the face.
3. If you are using a simple emollient or moisturising product at the same time, apply the betamethasone first.
4. Unless you are using the cream/ointment on the hands, wash your hands after use.
5. If the skin problem gets worse, stop using the cream/ointment and tell the doctor straight away. You should see some improvement within a week or two.
6. Side effects are unlikely unless you use a lot of the cream/ointment continuously for a long time. Side effects include thinning of the skin and, rarely, allergy to one of the ingredients.

### **Captopril tablets**

1. Captopril is used to treat high blood pressure and heart problems. It can also help prevent kidney damage in people who have diabetes.
2. You should take the first dose of captopril when you go to bed because it might make you feel dizzy or faint. This is especially important if you take water (diuretic) tablets as well.
3. You can take captopril tablets on an empty stomach or with food. Try to take them at the same time each day.
4. Like all medicines, this one can have some unwanted effects. These include skin rashes, dry cough, dizziness, upset stomach and loss of taste. Tell your doctor if any unwanted effects are persistent or troublesome.
5. Problems can occur if captopril is taken with some other medicines. Are you taking any other prescribed medicines or medicines you have bought?

### **Chloramphenicol eye-drops**

1. Chloramphenicol is an antibiotic used to treat eye infections.
2. It is important to use these eye-drops as frequently and for as long as the doctor advised.
3. If using two drops for each dose, wait for a minute or two between applying the first and second drop. Using more than two drops will not help, because the excess will run out of your eye.
4. Pressing your finger against the inner corner of the eye (by the nose) for about a minute after using the drops can help to stop the drops draining into your nose and throat.
5. Do not wear contact lenses while using these drops
6. Chloramphenicol eye-drops can be stored at room temperature for up to a month. If you do not need to start using the drops straight away, they should be stored in the fridge.
7. Some people feel a brief stinging after using these eye-drops. If this is prolonged or your eyes do not get better, speak to your pharmacist or doctor.

### **Co-amoxiclav tablets**

1. Co-amoxiclav is an antibiotic which contains amoxicillin and clavulanic acid. It is used to treat infections.
2. One ingredient is a type of penicillin. If you are allergic to penicillin, do not take any of this medicine without first telling your doctor.
3. Try to space the doses evenly through the day - one dose every eight hours if you are taking the tablets three times a day.
4. It is important that you keep taking the tablets until they have all gone, even if you feel better quickly.
5. Most medicines sometimes have side effects. If you find the tablets cause mild stomach upset or diarrhoea, try taking them just before a meal. If you have bad diarrhoea, skin rashes, itching, wheezing or difficulty breathing, stop taking the medicine and tell your doctor straight away.
6. For women of child bearing age Co-amoxiclav can reduce the effectiveness of some contraceptive pills. You may need to use an additional form of contraception while you are taking it.

### **Co-careldopa tablets**

1. Co-careldopa is used to treat Parkinson's disease. It is particularly helpful for problems of rigidity and slow movement.
2. It is important to keep taking the tablets regularly unless your doctor tells you to stop. If you suddenly stop taking them your condition could get worse.
3. It is best not to take iron supplements for at least one hour before and after taking co-careldopa. They can reduce the amount of co-careldopa your body absorbs, so it will not work so well.
4. The tablets can cause nausea, but taking them with or after food may help prevent this. In some cases, when you have been taking the tablets for some time, your doctor may suggest that you take them on an empty stomach.
5. Co-careldopa can have some other unwanted effects. The most common side effects are involuntary body movements and mental changes, including confusion and anxiety. Tell your doctor if these or any other side effects are persistent or troublesome.
6. This medicine can make your urine a darker colour but this is not usually a cause for concern.

### **Co-codamol tablets (8/500 and 30/500)**

1. Co-codamol tablets contain two pain killers: paracetamol and codeine.
2. The usual adult dose is one to two tablets every four to six hours as needed for pain. It is important that you do not take more than two tablets at any one time and that you do not take more than eight tablets in 24 hours.
3. You should not take any other medicines that have paracetamol in them while taking co-codamol. Paracetamol is often included in cold and 'flu remedies and other medicines you can buy. If you are unsure whether another medicine can be taken with co-codamol, please ask your pharmacist.
4. These tablets occasionally cause drowsiness. Do not drive if you feel sleepy. Alcohol can make the drowsiness worse and is best avoided.
5. Other side effects that co-codamol can cause include constipation and nausea. If you have any problems tell your pharmacist or doctor.

### **Co-dydramol tablets**

1. Co-dydramol tablets contain two pain killers: paracetamol and dihydrocodeine.
2. The usual dose is one or two tablets every four to six hours, but you should not take more than eight in 24 hours.
3. It is sometimes suggested that these tablets are taken with or after food, but this is not essential.
4. Like all medicines, this one can have some unwanted effects. Nausea and constipation can occur. Eating foods with plenty of fibre will help prevent constipation.
5. Occasionally people feel drowsy. It is best not to drive until you see how you are affected. Alcohol can make drowsiness worse and is best avoided.
6. You should not take any other medicines which have paracetamol in them while taking co-dydramol. Paracetamol is often included in cold and 'flu remedies, and in other medicines that you can buy. Please ask your pharmacist before you take anything else.

### **Combined oral contraceptives: 21-day monophasic products**

1. These tablets are usually called "the pill." They are used for contraception and occasionally for menstrual problems.
2. You take one tablet each day for 21 days. Then leave a gap of seven days before you start the next pack of 21.
3. If you are not on the pill already, you usually start taking them on the day your period (bleeding) starts. Contraceptive protection starts immediately.
4. If you are changing from another type of pill, the start day depends on which pill you have been taking. Do you remember what it is called?
5. Sickness or diarrhoea, and some medicines (eg, antibiotics) can make this pill less effective. In such cases you should keep taking the pill, but use another type of contraception as well (eg, condoms). Your pharmacist can advise you about this.
6. Like all medicines, this one can cause some side effects. The leaflet inside the pack includes more information about this. Speak to your pharmacist or doctor if you are unsure about any side effects.

### **Co-proxamol tablets**

1. Co-proxamol tablets help to relieve pain. They contain two active ingredients: paracetamol and dextropropoxyphene.
2. It is important that you do not take more than two tablets at any one time and you should not take more than eight in 24 hours.
3. You should not take other medicines containing paracetamol while taking these tablets. Paracetamol is often included in cold or 'flu remedies, and in other medicines you can buy. If you are unsure whether another medicine can be taken with co-proxamol, please ask your pharmacist.
4. These tablets can make you drowsy. Do not drive if you feel sleepy. Alcohol will make the drowsiness worse, so do not drink alcohol while taking these tablets.
5. Other side effects which co-proxamol may cause include dizziness, nausea, constipation and rashes. If you have any problems, tell your pharmacist or doctor.

### **Diazepam tablets**

1. Diazepam is used to treat several conditions, most commonly anxiety, difficulty sleeping and muscle spasms.
2. The tablets can make you drowsy during the day and can slow your reactions. Do not drive if you feel sleepy. Alcohol may make the drowsiness worse, so do not drink alcohol while taking these tablets.
3. Other side effects which diazepam can cause include unsteadiness, muscle weakness, dizziness and confusion.
4. Problems can occur if diazepam is taken with some other medicines. Are you taking any other prescribed medicines or medicines you have bought?
5. If you have been taking these tablets for a long time but want to stop, talk to your doctor first. You may need to reduce the dose slowly so that your body has time to adjust.

### **Diclofenac tablets**

1. Diclofenac is used to relieve pain, particularly pain in the muscles and joints.
2. The tablets/capsules should be swallowed whole with a drink of water or milk, not crushed or chewed.
3. Avoid taking indigestion remedies for at least one hour before and after taking diclofenac. They can affect the special coating that makes the diclofenac work most efficiently.
4. Some people have indigestion after taking diclofenac. To prevent this, diclofenac should be taken with or just after food. If indigestion or heartburn persists, you should contact your doctor.
5. Other side effects that occasionally occur with diclofenac include diarrhoea, feeling sick, headache and dizziness. If you have severe indigestion (stomach pain), difficulty in breathing or a skin rash, stop taking the medicine and contact the doctor straight away.
6. Problems can occur if diclofenac is taken with some other medicines. Are you taking any other prescribed medicines or medicines you have bought?

### **Digoxin tablets**

1. Digoxin tablets help the heart to beat strongly and regularly.
2. It is important to take the tablets regularly. Try to take them at the same time each day. Do not stop taking them without first speaking to your doctor.
3. Avoid taking indigestion remedies for at least one hour before and after taking the digoxin. They can reduce the amount of digoxin your body absorbs and so make it less effective.
4. Problems can occur if digoxin is taken with some other medicines. Are you taking any other prescribed medicines or medicines you have bought?
5. Like all medicines, this one can have some unwanted effects. If you feel sick, vomit, lose your appetite, or have palpitations or blurred vision, tell your doctor straight away.

### **Dihydrocodeine tablets**

1. Dihydrocodeine is a type of pain killer.
2. It is sometimes suggested that these tablets are taken with or after food but this is not essential.
3. The tablets can make you feel drowsy. If you feel drowsy do not drive. Alcohol can make drowsiness worse and is best avoided.
4. Dihydrocodeine can have some other unwanted effects. Nausea, constipation, headache and dizziness can occur. Tell your doctor if these or any other side effects are persistent or troublesome. Eating foods that contain plenty of fibre and drinking plenty of fluid will help prevent constipation.
5. Problems can occur if dihydrocodeine is taken with some other medicines. Are you taking any other prescribed medicines or medicines you have bought?

### **Erythromycin tablets**

1. This medicine is an antibiotic used to treat infections.
2. You should complete the course, even if you feel better quickly, otherwise the infection may come back. Try to space the doses evenly through the day.
3. Some people feel sick after taking a dose of this medicine. If this happens, try taking the next dose with or just after food. If it makes you vomit, causes bad, watery diarrhoea or causes any unusual skin problems, tell your doctor.
4. Problems can occur if erythromycin is taken with some other medicines. Are you taking any other prescribed medicines or medicines you have bought? If you are prescribed or buy any other medicines before you finish this course of treatment, make sure the doctor or pharmacist knows you are taking erythromycin.

### **Ferrous sulphate tablets**

1. Ferrous sulphate tablets contain iron. Your body needs iron to make red blood cells.
2. These tablets are best taken on an empty stomach (at least one hour before or two hours after food) so as much as possible of the iron is taken up by the body. However, ferrous sulphate sometimes causes stomach upsets. If this happens, try taking the tablets with or just after food.
3. Some people notice that ferrous sulphate makes their stools a very dark or black colour. This is not usually of any concern.
4. These tablets sometimes cause diarrhoea or constipation. If this is persistent or troublesome, tell your pharmacist or doctor.
5. Problems can occur if ferrous sulphate is taken with some other medicines. Are you taking any other prescribed medicines or medicines you have bought?

### **Fluoxetine capsules**

1. Fluoxetine is used to treat depression, some eating disorders and occasionally other problems.
2. This medicine takes some time to work fully. You may need to keep taking it for two to four weeks before you feel better.
3. Fluoxetine is not an addictive or habit forming medicine, but you should not stop taking it without telling your doctor first.
4. Fluoxetine does not usually cause drowsiness, but it might make some skilled tasks like driving difficult. If you have any problems, you should avoid driving and using machinery.
5. Like all medicines, this one can have some unwanted effects. Side effects, such as nausea, diarrhoea and headache, may go away after the first few weeks taking fluoxetine. If these are troublesome or persistent you should tell your doctor. If you get a skin rash, stop taking the medicine and tell your doctor straight away.
6. Problems occasionally occur with fluoxetine if you take or have recently taken some other medicines, especially other antidepressants. Are you taking or have you recently taken any other medicines?

### **Frusemide tablets**

1. Frusemide tablets are often called "water" or "fluid" tablets, or "diuretics." They clear excess body water by increasing the amount of urine you produce.
2. When you first start to take these tablets you will probably need to go to the toilet more often (mostly in the first two hours after you have taken them). But you will notice this less once you have been taking the tablets for a while.
3. It is best to take the tablets in the morning so that you do not need to get up in the night to go to the toilet.
4. Like all medicines, this one can have some unwanted effects. Nausea occasionally occurs, but usually goes away if you keep taking the tablets. Tell your doctor if you have headache, muscle cramps or dizziness. Tell your doctor straight away if you have a skin rash.

### **Gliclazide tablets**

1. Gliclazide is used to treat a type of diabetes. It helps to control the amount of sugar in your blood.
2. Up to two tablets can be taken just before or with breakfast. If you take more than two tablets each day, take the further tablet(s) just before or with your evening meal.
3. It is important to stick to the diet the doctor has advised; gliclazide alone cannot control blood sugar.
4. Like all medicines, gliclazide tablets can have some unwanted effects. If you find that the tablets cause indigestion, diarrhoea, nausea or constipation, taking them with a meal may help. If you get a rash or yellowing of the eyes or skin, tell your doctor straight away.
5. Problems can occur if gliclazide is taken with some other prescribed medicines or medicines you can buy. Ask your pharmacist or doctor before you take anything else.

### **Hypromellose eye-drops**

1. Hypromellose eye-drops are used to treat dry eye problems and are sometimes called artificial tears.
2. Use one or two drops for each dose. Using more than two drops will not help, because the excess will run out of your eye.
3. These drops can cause problems if you wear soft contact lenses. Do you ever wear contact lenses?
4. You should start a new bottle of eye-drops each month, even if you have not used all of the drops in the bottle already opened.
5. Occasionally people find that the drops themselves irritate the eye. Tell your doctor if your eyes or eyelids become red, swollen or sore, or if you find that you need to use the drops much more frequently than usual.

### **Ibuprofen tablets**

1. These tablets occasionally cause mild indigestion so it is better to take them with food.
2. Some people who have asthma or stomach problems should not take this medicine. Have you suffered from either of these?
3. You must not take these tablets if you are allergic to aspirin or other pain killers.
4. Like all medicines, this one can have some unwanted effects. If you have severe indigestion (stomach pain), difficulty breathing or a skin rash, stop taking the tablets and contact the doctor straight away.
5. Some pain killers you can buy contain similar ingredients to these tablets. Make sure you ask your pharmacist or doctor before you take anything else.

### **Isosorbide dinitrate and mononitrate modified release capsules and tablets**

1. This medicine is used to prevent attacks of chest pain (angina) and to relieve heart failure. It works by relaxing blood vessels, so blood can flow more easily.
2. The tablets/capsules should be swallowed whole with a glass of water. They will not work properly if they are crushed or chewed.
3. Food does not affect this medicine. You can take it with, before, or after food.
4. It is quite common to get a headache or flushing when you first start taking this medicine. This usually goes away after a few days, but if it persists or is troublesome you should tell your doctor.
5. A few people have dizziness, fainting or weakness with this medicine. Tell your doctor if this happens.
6. After taking this medicine for some time, you may find that it does not seem to be working as well as it was. If this happens, tell your doctor. Do not increase the dose without contacting your doctor first.

### **Ispaghula husk**

1. Ispaghula contains fibre and is usually used to help maintain normal bowel function.
2. It is important to stir the powder/granules into a glass of water (150ml/quarter of a pint) and drink immediately. If left to stand, it will become too thick to drink.
3. Ispaghula must not be taken dry or just before going to bed.
4. When used to relieve constipation, the full effect can take up to three days to develop.
5. Although side effects are rare, you may notice increased flatulence or bloating during the first few days of treatment.

### **Lactulose solution**

1. This is a laxative. It works by keeping water in the bowel and that helps to soften the stools.
2. It can take up to three days to work and is best taken regularly, not "when required".
3. Lactulose may cause abdominal "fullness" or bloating and an increase in flatulence (wind) for the first few days after starting treatment, but this usually clears if treatment is continued.
4. Some people find lactulose unpleasant to take. If necessary, it may be mixed with water, fruit juice or squash.
5. Lactulose will help relieve constipation, but other things are important as well. You need to eat plenty of fibre (fresh fruit, vegetables, bran) and to drink plenty of fluid.

### **Lansoprazole capsules**

1. Lansoprazole reduces acid production by the stomach. It is usually used to treat heartburn (sometimes called acid reflux) or ulcers in the stomach or intestine.
2. The capsules are usually taken once each day, preferably in the morning before breakfast.
3. It is important to swallow the capsules whole with a drink of water.
4. Like all medicines, lansoprazole can have some unwanted effects. These include headaches, diarrhoea, itching and rashes. Tell your doctor if any side effect is troublesome or persistent.
5. Problems can occur if lansoprazole is taken with some other prescribed medicines or medicines you can buy. Are you taking any other medicines?

### **Loratadine tablets**

1. Loratadine is an antihistamine. It is used to treat hay fever and other allergy symptoms (eg, itchy skin, runny nose, sneezing, eye irritation).
2. Loratadine does not usually cause drowsiness, but if you do feel drowsy you should not drive or operate machinery.
3. Loratadine is usually taken once each day. The tablets start to act within half to one hour and keep working for about 24 hours.
4. Side effects are rare. Tell your pharmacist or doctor if you do experience any unwanted effects.

### **Metformin tablets**

1. Metformin is used to treat a type of diabetes. It helps to control the amount of sugar in your blood.
2. Take the tablets with or after some food.
3. Metformin can sometimes cause stomach upsets and diarrhoea, but if you keep taking the tablets this should go away in a week or so. Taking the tablets with food helps to prevent this. If any side effects are persistent or troublesome tell your pharmacist or doctor.
4. It is important to stick to the diet the doctor has advised and to try to take regular exercise.
5. Some medicines you can buy for heartburn or indigestion can cause problems with these tablets. Ask your pharmacist or doctor before you take anything else.

### **Nifedipine modified release preparations**

1. This medicine contains nifedipine and is used to treat several conditions, most commonly high blood pressure and chest pain (angina).
2. The tablets/capsules should be swallowed whole with a glass of liquid. They will not work properly if they are crushed or chewed.
3. Grapefruit and grapefruit juice can affect this medicine. Do you eat or drink either of these?
4. Like all medicines, nifedipine can have some side effects. These include headache, dizziness and flushing. Ankle swelling may occur, particularly if you sit down for a long time. If you do sit down for much of the day, it is a good idea to rest your feet on a stool. Tell your doctor if any unwanted effects are persistent or troublesome.
5. Problems can occur if this medicine is taken with some other prescribed medicines or medicines you can buy. Ask your pharmacist or doctor before you take anything else.

### **Omeprazole capsules**

1. Omeprazole acts to reduce the production of acid in the stomach. It is usually used to treat ulcers in the stomach and intestine, or bad heartburn.
2. The capsules are generally taken once each day and should be swallowed whole with a drink of water. If you find the capsules difficult to swallow, you can open them and mix the contents with fruit juice or yogurt.
3. Like all medicines, this one can have some unwanted effects. For omeprazole, these include headache, diarrhoea and skin rashes. Tell your doctor if any side effect is troublesome or persistent.
4. Problems occasionally occur if omeprazole is taken with other medicines. Are you taking any other medicines?
5. When supplied in bottles It is important that you keep the capsules in their original container and put the cap back after use, so they don't go off. Once opened, the medicine should be used within three months.

### **Oxybutynin tablets**

1. Oxybutynin is used to help with bladder control so that you need to pass water less often.
2. The tablets can be taken with food or on an empty stomach. If you find they cause any stomach upset, try taking them with food or a drink of milk.
3. It is important to drink at least six to nine cups of fluid every day so that your kidneys work properly. You may find it helpful to reduce the number of drinks you have which contain caffeine (like tea and coffee) and to drink less in the evening, so that you do not need to get up in the night to go to the toilet.
4. These tablets may make you feel drowsy or cause blurred vision. If this happens do not drive or operate machinery.
5. Other side effects which oxybutynin can cause include dry mouth, constipation and facial flushing. Tell your doctor if any unwanted effects are persistent or troublesome.
6. Problems can occur if oxybutynin is taken with some other medicines. Are you taking any other prescribed medicines or medicines you have bought?

### **Paracetamol tablets**

1. Paracetamol relieves pain and helps to reduce fever.
2. It is important that you do not take more than eight tablets in 24 hours and that you do not take more than two tablets at any one time.
3. Side effects are rare with paracetamol, but serious problems can occur if you take more than the recommended dose. If you find the recommended dose is not effective do not take more, contact your doctor.
4. You should not take other medicines containing paracetamol while taking these tablets. Paracetamol is often included in cold and 'flu remedies, and in other medicines you can buy. (Such medicines have "contains paracetamol" printed on the pack.) If you are unsure whether another medicine can be taken with these tablets, please ask your pharmacist.

### **Penicillin V tablets**

1. This medicine is an antibiotic which is usually used to treat infections. Occasionally it is used to prevent infections.
2. It is a type of penicillin. If you are allergic to penicillin, do not take any of this medicine without first telling your doctor/dentist.
3. It is important that you keep taking the tablets until they have all gone, even if you feel better quickly. Space the doses evenly through the day.
4. Try to take the tablets at least one hour before or two hours after meals. The medicine will not work so well if you take it with food.
5. Like all medicines, penicillin V can have some unwanted effects. Some people have diarrhoea, but this usually stops within a day or two of finishing the tablets. If the diarrhoea does not stop or if is very bad, you should tell your doctor. If you have itching, a skin rash, wheezing or difficulty breathing, contact your doctor straight away.
6. Women of child-bearing age This medicine can reduce the effectiveness of some contraceptive pills. You may need to use an additional form of contraception while you are taking it.

### **Phenytoin tablets and capsules**

1. This medicine is often used to help control fits and seizures, and is sometimes used to treat pain.
2. It is important to take the medicine regularly. This helps to keep the right amount in the body for best control of symptoms.
3. The tablets/capsules should be washed down with plenty of fluid. Taking them with or after food can help avoid any stomach upset.
4. Do not stop taking this medicine without talking to your doctor first. Suddenly stopping may make your symptoms come back or get worse.
5. Like all medicines, phenytoin can have some unwanted effects. Occasionally people find their gums become red and thickened or more body hair grows - tell your doctor if this happens. If you have unusual bruising, bleeding, mouth ulcers, sore throat, fever or a skin rash you should contact your doctor straight away.
6. Problems can occur if phenytoin is taken with some other medicines. Are you taking any other prescribed medicines or medicines you have bought?

### **Quinine tablets (for night cramps)**

1. Quinine tablets are usually used to help prevent night-time leg cramps.
2. The tablets should be taken regularly at bedtime, swallowed with a drink of water.
3. This medicine can take some time to work fully. You may need to take it for several weeks before your symptoms improve.
4. Like all medicines, quinine can occasionally have some unwanted effects. If you have unusual itching, a rash, hearing or vision problems tell your doctor straight away.
5. Problems can occur if quinine is taken with some other medicines. Are you taking any other prescribed medicines or medicines you have bought?

### **Ranitidine tablets**

1. Ranitidine tablets can be taken with food or on an empty stomach, whichever is easier for you.
2. The tablets may make you feel better within a few days, but you should carry on taking them or the symptoms could come back. The doctor will tell you when to stop taking them.
3. They work by reducing the amount of acid in the stomach. Side effects are rare.
4. If you only take the tablets once each day, it is best to take them at bed-time because the stomach usually produces most acid at night.
5. Some indigestion remedies you can buy contain very similar ingredients to these tablets. Make sure you ask your pharmacist or doctor before you take anything else.

### **Salbutamol inhaler**

1. If you have another inhaler you use at the same time as this one, use this one first - about 10 minutes before the other.
2. If you take two puffs, wait for a minute or so after the first puff before shaking the container again and taking the second puff.
3. Your doctor may tell you to take an extra dose occasionally. But if you find you are often needing extra doses don't keep taking more, contact the doctor.
4. If difficulty in breathing persists after inhaling the medicine, you should call the doctor straight away.
5. Like all medicines, this one can have some unwanted effects. Some people have muscle tremors and a few have palpitations and headaches.
6. Some people find these inhalers hard to use. If you are finding it difficult your pharmacist may be able to help you, or there are other types of inhalers which you would probably find easier.

### **Senna tablets**

1. Senna is used to treat constipation and works by increasing movement in the gut. It generally acts in about eight to 12 hours.
2. For adults, the tablets are usually taken as a single dose at bedtime. For children, the dose is usually taken in the morning.
3. Senna sometimes causes mild abdominal pain but this generally goes away quite quickly.
4. Senna will help relieve constipation, but other things are important as well. If possible you need to eat plenty of fibre (fresh fruit, vegetables, bran), drink plenty of fluid and take some exercise.
5. Some medicines can cause constipation. Are you taking any other prescribed medicines or medicines you have bought?

### **Simvastatin tablets**

1. Simvastatin tablets reduce the amount of cholesterol produced by the body and help prevent heart disease.
2. The tablets should be taken once each day at night, because this is when the most cholesterol is produced.
3. It is important to stick to the diet advised by your doctor. Do not stop taking these tablets or change your diet without speaking to your doctor first, otherwise your condition could get worse.
4. Like all medicines, simvastatin can have some unwanted effects. Nausea, stomach upset and headache can occur, but may go away if you keep taking the tablets. Tell the doctor straight away if you have any unusual muscle pain, tenderness or weakness.
5. Problems can occur if simvastatin is taken with some other medicines. Are you taking any other prescribed medicines or medicines you have bought?

### **Sodium cromoglicate eye-drops**

1. Sodium cromoglicate is used to prevent and treat eye problems (eg, redness, itching, watering) caused by allergy, such as hay fever.
2. One or two drops are usually put in each eye four times a day.
3. The drops can take some time to work fully. You may need to use them regularly for several days before your symptoms improve.
4. You should not wear soft contact lenses while using these drops.
5. If you are using the drops for a long time, you should start a new bottle each month, even if you have not used up all the drops in the bottle already opened.
6. Some people feel a brief stinging after using the eye-drops. If this is prolonged or if your eyes do not get better, speak to your pharmacist or doctor.

### **Tamoxifen tablets**

1. Tamoxifen is used in the treatment of infertility and breast cancer. It is one of a group of medicines called anti-oestrogens.
2. The tablets are taken once or twice each day with a glass of water.
3. Keep taking the tablets unless your doctor tells you to stop, otherwise your condition could get worse.
4. Tamoxifen can cause irregular vaginal bleeding. (For premenopausal women it may stop the monthly period.) If you have any unusual or irregular vaginal bleeding, vaginal discharge or pelvic pain tell your doctor straight away, even if you have stopped taking tamoxifen.
5. Other side effects which can occur with tamoxifen include hot flushes, nausea, vision problems, genital itching and lightheadedness. Tell your doctor if any unwanted effects are persistent or troublesome.

### **Temazepam tablets**

1. Take the medicine about half an hour before you want to sleep, then go to bed.
2. Avoid drinks with caffeine before bed as they can keep you awake. Certain cold remedies can also disturb sleep - check with your pharmacist before using these products. If you go on having trouble falling asleep, do not take extra doses without talking to your doctor.
3. Be careful if you have to get up in the night, you may feel very sleepy. If you still feel drowsy in the morning, do not drive.
4. You should not drink alcohol, even during the day, while taking this medicine.
5. Sleeping medicines are usually only used for a few weeks, because with time they can lose their effectiveness.
6. If you have been taking this medicine for a long time, it can be difficult to stop. Before you stop you should talk to the doctor, because you may need to reduce the dose slowly so your body has time to adjust.

### **Thyroxine tablets**

1. Thyroxine is often used to treat problems where the body is not able to produce enough thyroxine naturally. This may be when the thyroid gland is not working properly or when it has had to be removed.
2. The tablets are usually taken once each day.
3. It is best to take thyroxine at least half an hour before breakfast, because food can stop this medicine being absorbed properly.
4. Side effects are rare with thyroxine. Any problems may mean the doctor needs to change the dose you take. If you have palpitations, chest pain, muscle cramps, weight loss, sweating or anxiety you should tell your doctor.
5. Do not stop taking this medicine without talking to your doctor first. If you suddenly stop, your symptoms could come back.

### **Trimethoprim tablets**

1. Trimethoprim works like an antibiotic. It is used to prevent and treat infections.
2. Try to remember to take the tablets regularly. Swallow them with a glass of water.
3. It is important that you complete the course of treatment, even if you feel better quickly, otherwise the infection may come back.
4. Food does not affect this medicine so you can take it with food or on an empty stomach.
5. Like most medicines, trimethoprim can have some unwanted effects. These include nausea, vomiting, itching and rashes. Tell your doctor if any unwanted effects are persistent or troublesome.
6. If you take trimethoprim for a long time (more than two weeks) it can occasionally affect the blood. If you have unusual bruising, bleeding, mouth ulcers, sore throat or a widespread rash you should contact your doctor straight away.