



Guiding principles for medication management in the community

JUNE 2006

These Guiding Principles aim to promote quality use of medicines and better medication management in the community. It is intended that the Guiding Principles will assist service providers to develop or evaluate policies and procedures, support those involved in assisting consumers, and support consumers to manage their medicine(s).



Guiding Principle 1 – Information resources

All health care professionals and care workers should have access to current, accurate and balanced information about medicines. This will assist health care providers and care workers to provide consumers with appropriate information, including Consumer Medicine Information (CMI), and advice about medicine use, in a timely manner.



Guiding Principle 2 – Self-administration

Consumers should be encouraged to maintain their independence for as long as possible, including managing their own medicines in a safe and effective way.



Guiding Principle 3 – Dose Administration Aids

Dispensed medicines should be retained in the original manufacturers' or other dispensed packaging unless a Dose Administration Aid (DAA) could help to overcome specific problems that a consumer or care worker might face.



Guiding Principle 4 – Administration of medicines in the community

Health care professionals, care workers and service providers all play an important role in making sure that consumers who live at home receive suitable information and/or assistance so that they take their medicines correctly.



Guiding Principle 5 – Medication lists

Consumers should be supported in maintaining a current list of all their medicines. This list should be available and easily accessible to the consumer and all those involved in the consumer's care.





Guiding Principle 6 – Medication review

Consumers are encouraged to have their medicines reviewed by members of the health care team. These reviews should follow the relevant professional guidelines.



Guiding Principle 7 – Alteration of oral formulations

Some consumers might need to have oral formulations altered, for example, tablets broken or crushed to aid administration. However, some medicines cannot be altered and the consumer might need alternative formulations or different medicines instead. These consumers should be given the help they need to guarantee their medicines are managed safely and effectively.



Guiding Principle 8 – Storage of medicines

Consumers using medicines in the community should be encouraged to store their medicines in a manner that maintains the quality of the medicine and safeguards the consumer, their family and visitors in their home.



Guiding Principle 9 – Disposal of medicines

Consumers and/or their carers should be encouraged to return any unwanted, ceased or expired medicines to their local community pharmacy for safe disposal.



Guiding Principle 10 – Nurse-initiated non-prescription medicine

Service providers should develop policies and procedures about the safe practices related to nurse initiation of non-prescription medicines.



Guiding Principle 11 – Standing orders

The use of standing orders in the community for the administration of prescription medicines is generally discouraged. However, where standing orders are required in special circumstances, service providers should have policies and procedures in place for their use.



Guiding Principle 12 – Risk management in the administration and use of medicines in the community

Health care professionals, care workers, service providers, and consumers and/or carers should work together to manage risks and incidents associated with medicine use in the community.

The Guiding Principles document can be obtained by contacting the APAC Secretariat by phone **(02) 6289 7753** or email **apac@health.gov.au**.