

# Be prepared...

## To make over your medicine cabinet

Coughs, colds, headaches and other common illnesses can leave you feeling unwell and struggling to carry on as normal. Be prepared by keeping a well-stocked medicine cabinet at home.

All it takes is just 5 minutes to make sure your medicine cabinet is ready to help you manage common illnesses. GPs recommend your medicine cabinet should contain the following:

- ✓ A self care guide
- ✓ Painkillers, such as paracetamol or ibuprofen
- ✓ Antihistamines for allergies
- ✓ Antiseptic cream for bites and stings
- ✓ A laxative to help constipation
- ✓ Sunscreen
- ✓ A first aid kit with plasters and bandages to manage cuts and sprains



Always be careful to follow the product instructions and regularly check medicines are still in date. If you're not sure what medicines to stock or how best to treat the symptoms of common health problems, ask your pharmacist for advice.

## Stocking a safe medicine cabinet

There are some everyday medicines that you can stock up on and keep handy in your home - remember to keep these medicines together in a safe place, out of the reach of children.

The following is a suggestion of what a well-stocked medicine cabinet should contain which are available from any pharmacy without a prescription and will help you and your family to deal with minor illnesses.

Please read the instructions and cautions on all medicines before you decide to use them and ask a pharmacist for advice if in doubt.

- Paracetamol tablets (for adults) -for headaches, fevers, colds, sore throats, aches and pains
- Paracetamol mixture -for pain and fever in children
- Ibuprofen (tablets or syrup) -for pain and fever in adults and children
- Antihistamine (tablets or syrup) -for allergies, bites and itchy rashes
- Oral rehydration sachets -to replace lost water and salts from diarrhoea
- Cream or spray for insect bites or stings
- Steam inhalations (or vapour rubs) -for relief of cold symptoms and stuffy noses
- Antacid -for indigestion/upset stomach
- Hydrocortisone cream -for itchy skin rashes and bites
- Thermometer
- Measuring spoon or oral syringe

You should also keep a First Aid kit with antiseptic solution and cream, cotton wool, plasters, crepe bandage and tweezers.

## Storing medicines

- Keep medicines in a cool dark place, away from direct heat or light sources. Do not keep medicines in the bathroom (even in a cabinet) as they can become hot, humid or damp
- Always read the patient information leaflet or labels
- Keep medicines well out of the reach of children. A medicines cabinet placed about five feet above the floor that can be locked is ideal
- Keep medicines in their original container, so that you know what the medicine is, how to take it, any extra instructions and the expiry date
- If you have medicines you no longer need, take them to your local pharmacy and they will dispose of them safely

## Giving medicines to children

- Children under the age of 16 should not take aspirin or aspirin-based medicines
- Check the dose carefully. For liquid medicines, measure the dose with care. Use an oral syringe if the dose is less than 5ml. (You can get an oral syringe from your local pharmacy)