



Health & Medicines Information Guide & Directory | Revised 2nd Edition 2005

www.askaboutmedicines.org



Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry



Introduction

Everyone should be entitled to participate in decisions about their own health and whether a medicine is right for them. There is an enormous amount of information about health and medicines available from a large number of different sources, but it is not always easy to know how and where to start looking for it. This booklet has been prepared by a partnership, representing health professionals, patient organisations, the NHS, Government and the pharmaceutical industry, to provide you with some guidance on how to find information on health issues and medicines, and how to judge if that information meets your needs. At the end of the booklet, you will find a directory listing a range of information resources and internet-based links that will help you get started.

An interactive version of this booklet, with direct links to the information sources listed, can be accessed via the Ask About Medicines website (www.askaboutmedicines.org).

Copies of the booklet can also be downloaded in printable format from the same address.

We hope you find this booklet useful and wish you every success in your search for reliable and helpful health information.

Asking About Health & Medicines

The key to finding the health information you need lies in asking the right questions. Here are some questions you might want to ask:

? Who can I talk to about my health concerns and any questions I have about my medicine?

? Where can I look for health information?

? What should I consider?

? Can I trust this information?

? Does this information meet my needs?

? Do I need more information?

Once you have answers to your questions you will be better placed to think what this information means to you and how you can use it when making decisions about your health.



Who can I talk to about my health concerns and any questions I have about my medicine?

There are a number of people you might want to talk to about your health condition or concerns, including health professionals, patient support groups and companies, including the company that makes your medicine.

Health professionals

These include:

- GPs and hospital specialist consultants
- Nurses (including practice nurses, district nurses and health visitors)
- Pharmacists
- Dentists

Health professionals are best placed to help you decide how the health information you have found relates to your personal health needs. Those who have access to your full medical history will be able to answer questions specifically relating to your health from your case notes. Others may need to ask you some questions in order to give you advice. You can feel confident in asking questions and discussing your health concerns with health professionals.

Remember that pharmacists are experts in medicines and available to answer your questions. They can also offer advice about general health conditions, such as headaches or colds, which are not always serious enough for a visit to the doctor.

Tips for asking questions

Health professionals will listen to your views and concerns and answer your questions, but they may have a limited amount of time. To make the most of your time with them, you could try the following:

- **Write down** any questions you have before you visit or phone.
- **Ask** the most important questions first.
- **Ask about** any terms or jargon you don't know.
- **Request** a simple explanation if you don't understand what was said.
- **Write down** the main points quickly afterwards, as a reminder.
- **Phone or visit** again if you have any other questions.

Health charities and patient support groups

Health charities and patient support groups fulfil a number of roles, including medical research, campaigning, service delivery and the provision of information and advice. Some do a combination of these things, or all of them.

Patient support groups consist of other people with the same condition or carers looking after someone affected by it. They can offer you practical tips for living with your condition, or you may find that sharing your experiences and concerns with someone in similar circumstances is very reassuring.

Whatever the main focus, if a health charity or patient support group has an information and advice service, then you can be sure

that they are used to answering all sorts of questions, so don't be afraid of asking about whatever is bothering you. They will know when (if necessary) to refer you on to other sources of information and advice.

When discussing health concerns:

- Be honest about your concerns.
- Ask what tests there are, if there are other medicines or treatments available, and how effective they are in comparison.
- Write down your concerns in a letter if you feel they are too embarrassing or difficult to discuss in person.
- Tell them if you don't read or speak English well, or if you have trouble hearing or seeing. Ask if any reading material is available in your language, on audiotape or in large type.
- Take along a friend to help you understand.

Asking about your medicines

- Ask if you need help getting a regular supply of your medicines.
- Share any questions or concerns about medicines you are prescribed or buying – and ask about other options.
- Tell a health professional about the medicines you are taking.
- Tell them if you think the medicines you are taking aren't working, or are giving you side effects.
- Ask if you are unsure how to take medicines or for how long.

Questions to ask

- What does this medicine do?
- Why is it important that I take this medicine? Are there any other treatment options?
- When and how should I take it?
- How long should I take it for?
- What should I be aware of when taking this medicine? *(Possible risks, side effects, taking medicine with certain foods/drinks/activities, what to do if I don't feel well while taking it, how to store it safely, etc.)*
- Where can I go for more information?

The company that makes your medicine

Another source of information about your medicine is the company that makes it. Information provided by companies that make medicines is controlled and must conform with regulatory guidance to ensure that it is factual and balanced.

Although your first approach should usually be to your health professional, medicine manufacturers all have a Medical Information Department, which can answer questions about their medicines.

However, companies are not allowed to give you advice on personal medical matters and are in a position to provide information only about the medicines they make, so you should check other sources for information on different medicines or treatment choices.

Some facts and figures about medicines

- There are more than 3,000 prescription medicines available in the UK, all of which have undergone rigorous testing.
- It takes an average of ten to twelve years and £500 million to bring a medicine from the laboratory to the point where it can be made available for patients.
- The great majority of medicines research, to discover and develop new medicines, is carried out by the pharmaceutical industry. Other organisations that fund research include charities, the Department of Health and the Medical Research Council.
- There are several hundred compounds for a range of diseases in various phases of development in the UK.
- No single manufacturer makes medicines for all conditions – each tends to specialise in a number of health fields.
- Companies all have doctors working for them who know about the diseases their products are designed to treat. However, your first source should be your health professional.
- Greater use of medicines has helped to improve the standards of treatment for patients, relieving pain and suffering and saving many lives.

How are medicines authorised?

- Initial research on a new medicine is carried out in the laboratory, using a wide variety of techniques. If the initial results are promising, it is then studied in animals under strict ethical and legal controls, to investigate effects that cannot be predicted from the computer and test tube studies.
- After that, a sequence of three phases of clinical trials is carried out under strict guidelines, to determine how the new medicine works in humans, to establish the dose required and to check that it does not produce unacceptable side-effects.
- Towards the end of these trials, many patients, perhaps several thousand, take the medicine under appropriate supervision for a specified period. It is tested in comparison with an established treatment and/or a dummy medicine (placebo). If the results prove satisfactory in terms of quality, efficacy and safety, all the data gathered are presented to the medicines evaluation authorities. If they are satisfied by the evidence, a marketing authorisation (licence) is issued.
- The newly licensed medicine is monitored in large numbers of patients to gain further experience of its effectiveness and safety in general use.

Before you make any changes in your medicines or other treatment, make sure you have the best possible information to back up your decision. If you are taking a prescription medicine, you are strongly advised to consult your doctor or pharmacist before stopping it or changing the dose. See the following section on 'Where can I look for health information?' for tips on finding information.



Where can I look for health information?

Health information can be found in many places, including:

- The leaflet that comes in your medicine pack
- On the internet
- By telephone
- Leaflets in doctors' waiting rooms, pharmacists, hospitals, etc
- Local library services
- In the media

Leaflet in your medicine pack

The information leaflet in your medicine pack will contain important information about your medicine and how you should take it. By law, every medicine must have a leaflet. It has been written by the company that makes the medicine under strict guidelines and has been checked by the Government's medicines regulator (see the box on 'How do I know my medicine is safe?' for more information). If you do not get a leaflet with your medicine, ask your pharmacist to provide one. The information in the leaflet may change as new things are learnt about the medicine, so read it again when you get a new supply.

The leaflet will tell you how the medicine will help your condition as well as telling you about side-effects and things to look out for. The list of potential side-effects can look quite daunting, but pharmaceutical companies are required to list them all, even when they happen extremely rarely. Not everyone will experience side-effects, but if you are concerned in any way, you should speak to your health professional.

Monitoring the safety of medicines

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is the government agency responsible for ensuring that medicines, healthcare products and medical equipment work, and are acceptably safe. We keep watch over medicines, and take necessary action to protect the public promptly if there is a problem.

If you think a medicine has caused an unwanted side effect or reaction, you can report the problem to the MHRA through the Yellow Card Scheme. Yellow Card reports are collected in confidence from both healthcare professionals and patients on all types of medicines, including prescription and over the counter medicines, herbal and other complementary remedies.

Even if you are unsure whether a medicine or combination of medicines has caused a side effect, please complete a Yellow Card form. Forms can be found in pharmacies and other outlets across the NHS. They are also available directly from the Yellow Card hotline on freephone 0808 100 3352 or can be completed on the web at www.yellowcard.gov.uk.

www.mhra.gov.uk



The Internet

The internet can be an excellent source of health information. Many of the health websites are subject to quality and even legal control and offer balanced information based on evidence. However,

anyone can put anything they want on the internet, and the first site listed when you search for a medical condition is not necessarily going to be the best for you, or come from a source that is reliable or quality controlled. Check out the other sites listed by the search engine as well. See the points listed under 'What Should I Consider?' to help you assess the quality of the information on a website. It is not advisable to buy prescription-only medicines online.

If you are not able to access the internet or want a wider range of information, you can try some of the following sources of information.

Telephone helplines

There are a number of different types of telephone helpline. Some consist of recorded messages, which can be accessed at any time, while others are staffed and usually operate during office hours or at specific times of the day. Some also respond to emails. They may be run by self-help groups, charities, the NHS (e.g. NHS Direct) or companies offering specific advice on their products. Make sure you know which organisation runs the helpline and that you understand their interest in the particular health field.

Helpline staff may be volunteers, employees, qualified nurses or trained information specialists, but almost all of them will be accustomed to dealing sympathetically with health-related queries over the telephone, and will know who to refer you to if they cannot answer your question. Most helplines will operate on a local or free rate, but some operate on premium rates, where you could run up an expensive bill. It is worth checking the call rate at the start of your call.

You may find details of a helpline on the leaflet that is in your medicine pack, or your local hospital may have a helpline that you can call if you have any specific questions about your medicines.

Doctors' waiting rooms, pharmacists, hospitals, etc

You may see leaflets in a waiting room or on the pharmacy counter. These are often distributed in partnership with health professional organisations, and can be a very useful source of information, so if you see one that looks interesting, pick it up and have a read.

Local Libraries

You may be able to find information and contact details about patient support groups and other sources of local health information from your library. A good library will also have a range of books, newspapers, magazines and audio-visual materials. Many libraries have internet access and all should have a copy of the Telephone Helplines Directory, which lists over 1,000 helplines covering a wide range of issues.

The media

Most newspapers will run health stories at least once or twice a week and there is a growing number of magazines dedicated to health, as well as health articles that can be found in weekly and monthly magazines. Television and radio also have a number of health programmes.

Many of these articles can be useful, but sometimes health 'scare stories' or articles that exaggerate the effects of a medicine can make headline news and may be misleading. If you are worried about anything you have read, heard or seen in the media that could affect the medications you are taking, and you are thinking of not taking it, do check with your health professional

first to make sure you understand all the implications of doing so. With the new 48-hour appointment system for GPs, you should not have to wait long to see the doctor.

What should I consider?

When you are looking for health information, or if you read or hear about a health topic in the media, there are a great number of points you can consider that could help you evaluate the reliability of the information you find. For example, can you tell if the information is based on facts, evidence or opinion? Other considerations are:

- Who produced the information?** Look for information from reliable sources, such as patient support groups, health charities, the NHS, health professional organisations and the company that makes your medicine. Some websites are sponsored, so check that any site you use is clear about its sponsorship and whether or not the sponsor has any influence over the information on the site. Information provided directly by the makers of medicines (including the Patient Information Leaflet in the pack) is required to conform to regulatory guidance, to ensure that it is factual and balanced.
- What is the aim of the organisation providing the information?** Look to see if the provider of the information has a specific focus that might bias the information, such as fund-raising or selling a product. (This would not necessarily mean that the information is not reliable, but it may affect how much information you decide to seek from other sources.)
- Does the information match your needs?** Have all your questions been answered, or should you keep looking at other leaflets, websites, etc?
- How is the information written?** Is it easy to understand? Does the information discuss the different sides of an issue? Does it state the benefits and limits of any research and provide a balanced view?
- Does the information contain references?** Look for references to the original source of the information. If there are references, it means that the information is based on fact as well as opinion. The references will indicate what the source of the information is (e.g. medical research, market research).
- Does the information show a date?** Look for the date when the information was first published or when it was last updated or reviewed. This will give you an indication of how old and potentially out of date the information is.
- Can you contact the organisation that issued the information?** Is the source of information clearly shown? Is there a postal address, telephone number, website or email address where you could get more information if you needed it?
- If it is a website, does it subscribe to a code of conduct or display a kitemark?** Look on websites for signs of approval or endorsement by organisations such as the NHS (e.g. the NHS Direct Online 'Information Partner' badge) or Health on the Net Foundation (www.hon.ch), which monitor the reliability and credibility of information. The absence of a kitemark is not a sign of poor quality: only a small number of sites currently apply for them.

? Can I trust the information?

Information that comes from reliable sources, where it has been verified by experts, is probably going to be the best available at that time. Opinions can be very different even amongst health professionals and researchers, and people with the same condition may have different views and experiences. So where does this leave you?

If you are confused by the information you have found, it is important that you discuss it with your health professional. Sometimes you will just feel that a treatment is 'right' or 'not right' for you. However, it is important that you understand the options. For example, if you are concerned about the side-effects or possible risk of taking a medicine, you owe it to yourself to make sure you understand what the effect of not taking it might be. You and your health professional can then discuss the potential benefits of the treatment against the potential side-effects or risks, consider any other options and decide what is going to be best for you.

Always discuss information and/or advice you've found about your treatments with your health professional before making any changes to your medication.

? Does this information meet my needs?

Does the information you have found help you by:

- Answering your questions?
- Giving you a better understanding of your health condition and/or treatment?
- Helping you to make choices and decisions about your health?

Each of us is an individual and what is right for one person will not necessarily be right for another. Information and others' opinions

and advice can help improve your understanding of the options available, but do consider it all carefully in the context of your own experience and preferences.

There are a great many sources of information about health and medicines, and sorting out facts from rumour is difficult. To make wise decisions about your medicines, you need the best possible information. Sticking to the main sources of information, such as health professionals, the NHS, patient support groups and the companies which make your medicines gives you a better chance of getting accurate, impartial and authoritative information and therefore gaining the opportunity to make an informed choice about your treatment.

? Do I need more information?

If you are not satisfied with the information you have found or been given and still have unanswered questions, then you may want to continue to search, or ask for other opinions.

However, too much information can be almost as unhelpful as too little. If you are confused, it is best to discuss your concerns with your health professional, who will also be able to help you understand the information you have found and what it means for you.

Better Information in the Future

How to provide people with accessible and high quality medicines information is currently being tackled by various parties, including the Department of Health, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, patient support groups and the companies which make medicines. More information about this work can be found on the Medicines Partnership website at www.medicines-partnership.org, or by telephone on 020 7572 2474.

Health & Medicines Information Directory

This directory will provide you with a good starting point but it is not intended to be all-inclusive. Most of the websites listed will have links to other sites. If you speak to someone from a Helpline who cannot answer your questions, they may be able to direct you to someone who can. We begin this section by offering a quick review of the basic ways you could start your search. Please tell us what you think of the sites you visit at info@askaboutmedicines.org.

Internet Search Tools

Internet Search Guides

For basic tips and guides on searching the internet, visit some of the following sites:

- A Basic Tutorial on Searching the Web
www.sc.edu/beaufort/library/pages/bones/bones.shtml
- Ask Bruce at BBC on the Internet
www.bbc.co.uk/webwise/askbruce/articles/search/index.shtml
- Power Searching for Anyone at
www.searchenginewatch.com/facts/article.php/2156031

Health Gateways

Start your internet search for any health care information by using a health gateway. These are searchable catalogues of good quality websites. Some examples of health gateways for UK patients are:

- NHS Direct Online www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
- Long-term Medical Conditions Alliance
www.lmca.org.uk
- Contact a Family (for families with disabled children)
www.cafamily.org.uk/dirworks.html
- Net Doctor www.netdoctor.co.uk
- Surgery Door www.surgerydoor.co.uk
- BBC Health www.bbc.co.uk/health

Judging Website Quality

The guideline available from Judge Health (www.judgehealth.co.uk) will help you make

your own way through the large quantity of information on the internet and to judge the quality of the sites you find.

Medicines Information

The electronic Medicines Compendium (eMC) provides information about medicines from the companies that make them, and has been approved by the Government's medicines regulator. The information includes the latest Patient Information Leaflets for each individual medicine and can be found at www.medicines.org.uk.

A lot of useful information provided by the pharmaceutical industry is available on line, including a directory of prescription medicines at www.dmd.medicines.org.uk. To complement the Patient Information Leaflet available with each medicine, a comprehensive set of Medicine Guides

is under development and is also available at www.medicines.org.uk. Details of companies that make prescription medicines can be found on the ABPI website (www.abpi.org.uk) and of

companies that make medicines you can buy “over the counter” on the PAGB web site (www.pagb.co.uk). There are codes of practice for the pharmaceutical industry and you can find them on these web sites.

Search Engines

Use search engines as part of your internet search if you cannot find what you are looking for from the gateways. Some examples of search engines covering health topics are:

- Google
www.google.co.uk
- AllTheWeb
www.alltheweb.com
- Yahoo
www.yahoo.com

Helpline Search Tools

Directories of Self-Help Groups and Patient Support Groups are available from:

- Patient UK:
www.patient.co.uk/selfhelp.asp
- UK Self Help:
www.ukselfhelp.info
- Telephone Helplines Association:
www.helplines.org.uk
- Find Support National Directory:
www.findsupport.co.uk

Places to go for Health & Medicines Information

The websites below are grouped according to condition, and the phone numbers given are helplines wherever possible. Unfortunately it would be impossible to list every helpful website here. Why not try using one of the health gateways listed to find out more information?

ALLERGY

- **British Allergy Foundation**
01322 619898
www.allergyfoundation.com

BABIES and SMALL CHILDREN

- **BLISS (Premature Baby Charity)**
0500 61 81 40
www.bliss.org.uk
- **Birth Defects Foundation**
01543 46 88 88
www.bdfcharity.co.uk

BLADDER and BOWEL

- **Bladder Zone**
www.bladderzone.co.uk
- **Continence Foundation**
0845 345 0165
www.continence-foundation.org.uk
- **Digestive Disorders Foundation**
020 7486 0341
www.digestivedisorders.org.uk
- **Gastro Club**
www.gastroclub.co.uk

■ **In Contact**

0870 770 3246
www.incontact.org

■ **Irritable Bowel Syndrome Network**

0114 272 3253
www.ibsnetwork.org.uk

■ **National Association for Colitis and Crohn's Disease**

0845 130 3344
www.nacc.org.uk

CANCER

■ **Breakthrough Breast Cancer**

08080 100 200
www.breakthrough.org.uk

■ **Breast Cancer Care**

0808 800 6000
www.breastcancercare.org.uk

■ **CancerBACUP**

0808 800 1234
www.cancerbacup.org.uk

■ **Cancerline UK**

www.cancerlineuk.net

■ **Cancer Research UK**

020 7061 8355
www.cancerhelp.org.uk

■ **CLIC Sargent** (for children with cancer)

020 8752 2800
www.sargent.org

■ **Colon Cancer Concern**

08708 50 60 50
www.coloncancer.org.uk

■ **Leukaemia Research Fund**

020 7405 0101
www.lrf.org.uk

■ **Lymphoma Association**

0808 808 5555
www.lymphoma.org.uk

■ **Macmillan Cancer Relief**

0808 808 2020
www.macmillan.org.uk

■ **Ovacome** (ovarian cancer)

020 7380 9589
www.ovacome.org.uk

■ **Prostate Cancer Charity**

0845 300 8383
www.prostate-cancer.org.uk

■ **Roy Castle Lung Foundation**

0871 220 5426
www.roycastle.org

■ **Tenovus the Cancer Charity**

0808 808 10 10
www.tenovus.com

CHILD and TEENAGE HEALTH

■ **Addiss – Attention Deficit Disorder**

020 8906 9068
www.addiss.co.uk

■ **Child Growth Foundation**

www.heightmatters.org.uk

■ **Contact A Family**

0808 808 3555
www.cafamily.org.uk

■ **LifeBytes**

www.lifebytes.gov.uk

■ **Teenage Health Freak**

www.teenagehealthfreak.org

■ **WellChild**

0845 122 86 36
www.wellchild.org.uk

CONTRACEPTION PREGNANCY and SEXUAL HEALTH

- **British Pregnancy Advisory Service**
08457 30 40 30
www.bpas.org
- **Brook**
0800 0185 023
www.brook.org.uk
- **Family Planning Association**
0845 310 1334
www.fpa.org.uk
- **IVF / Infertility**
www.ivf-infertility.com
- **Marie Stopes**
020 7574 7400
www.mariestopes.org.uk
- **UK Infertility and Parenting Forum**
www.fertilityzone.co.uk

DIABETES

- **Better Under Seven**
0845 123 2377
www.diabetesa1c.co.uk
- **Diabetes Insight**
www.diabetes-insight.info
- **Diabetes UK**
0845 120 2960
www.diabetes.org.uk
- **Insulin Dependent Diabetes Trust**
01604 622 837
www.iddtinternational.org

GENERAL HEALTH and MEDICINES INFORMATION

- **Consumer Health Information Centre**
(general advice on everyday healthcare problems)
www.chic.org.uk
- **Health Supplements Information Service**
www.hsis.org.uk
- **Medicine Chest On Line**
(information on medicines and food supplements available from your pharmacist)
www.medicinechestonline.com
- **National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE)**
(national guidance on the promotion of good health and the prevention and treatment of ill health)
020 7067 5800
www.nice.org.uk

- **National Pharmaceutical Association**
www.askyourpharmacist.co.uk

HEARING and SIGHT

- **Hearing Concern**
0845 074 4600
www.hearingconcern.com
- **International Glaucoma Association**
0870 609 1870
www.iga.org.uk

■ **RNIB** (helping you live with sight loss)
0845 766 9999
www.rnib.org.uk

■ **RNID** (for deaf and hard of hearing people)
0808 808 0123
textphone 0808 808 9000
www.rnid.org.uk

■ **Sense** (for deaf/blind people)
020 7561 3384
www.sense.org

HEART, BLOOD and CIRCULATION

■ **Anti Coagulation - Europe**
www.anticoagulationeurope.org

■ **Blood Pressure Association**
020 872 4994
www.bpassoc.org.uk

■ **British Cardiac Patients Association**
01954 202 022
www.bcpa.co.uk

■ **British Heart Foundation**
0845 070 8070
www.bhf.org.uk

■ **Children's Heart Foundation**
0808 808 5000
www.childrens-heart-fed.org.uk

■ **Deep Vein Thrombosis**
www.inate.org

■ **Haemophilia Society**
020 7380 0600
www.haemophilia.org.uk

■ **Hearts for Life**
www.heartsforlife.co.uk

■ **H.E.A.R.T UK**
01628 628 638
www.heartuk.org.uk

■ **Sickle Cell Society**
020 8961 7795
www.sicklecellsociety.org

■ **Stroke Association**
0845 30 33 100
www.stroke.org.uk

HIV and AIDS

■ **National AIDS Trust**
020 7814 6767
www.nat.org.uk

■ **Terrence Higgins Trust**
0845 12 21 200
www.tht.org.uk

■ **UK Coalition of Patients living with HIV and AIDS**
020 7564 2180
www.ukcoalition.org

■ **You Choose**
www.youchoose.org.uk

INFECTIONS

■ **British Polio Fellowship**
0800 01 80 586
www.britishpolio.org.uk

■ **Encephalitis Information Resource**
01653 699 599
www.encephalitis.info

■ Meningitis Research Foundation

24 hour helpline
0808 800 3344 (UK)
1890 41 33 44 (IRE)
www.meningitis.org

■ Meningitis Trust

0845 6000 800 (UK)
1800 523 196 (IRE)
www.meningitis-trust.org

■ RAPPID (paediatric pneumococcal infection)

0845 07 07 620
www.rappid.org.uk

■ The Herpes Viruses Association

0845 123 2305
www.herpes.org.uk

LEARNING DISABILITIES AND INFORMATION ABOUT MEDICATION FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

■ National Society For Epilepsy (epilepsy and learning difficulties)

01494 601 400
www.epilepsyse.org.uk/pages/info/leaflets/learning.cfm

■ The Elfrida Society (accessible health information for people with learning disabilities)

020 7359 7443
www.elfrida.com

■ SCOPE (cerebral palsy)

0808 800 3333
www.scope.org.uk

■ MENCAP

0808 808 1111
www.mencap.org.uk

LIVER AND KIDNEY

■ British Kidney Patients Association

01420 47 20 21
www.britishkidney-pa.co.uk

■ British Liver Trust

01425 463 080
www.britishlivertrust.org.uk

■ Children's Liver Disease Foundation

0121 212 3839
www.childliverdisease.org

■ National Kidney Federation

08456 01 02 09
www.kidney.org.uk

■ National Kidney Helpline

0845 300 1499

■ National Kidney Research Fund

0845 070 7601
www.nkrf.org.uk

MEN'S HEALTH

■ 3DE (erectile dysfunction)

www.3DE.org.uk

■ Impotence Association

0870 774 3571
www.impotence.org.uk

■ Men's Health Forum

020 7388 4449
www.menshealthforum.org.uk

■ Men's Health on the BBC

www.bbc.co.uk/health/mens

■ NetDoctor Erectile Dysfunction Community

www.manmatters.netdoctor.co.uk

- **Talking BPH (prostate)**
www.talkingbph.info

MENTAL HEALTH

- **Depression Alliance**
0845 123 23 20
www.depressionalliance.org
- **Hearing Voices Network**
0161 834 5768
www.hearing-voices.org
- **Making Space**
0113 274 6010
www.makingspace.co.uk
- **Manic Depression Fellowship**
08456 340 540
www.mdf.org.uk
- **Mental Health Foundation**
020 7803 1100
www.mentalhealth.org.uk
- **Mind**
0845 766 0163
www.mind.org.uk
- **National Institute For Mental Health in England**
0113 254 5127
www.nimhe.org.uk
- **Psychiatric Medication Helpline**
(South London & Maudsley NHS Trust)
020 7919 2999
- **Rethink**
020 8974 6814
www.rethink.org

- **SANE**
0845 767 8000
www.sane.org.uk

- **Young Minds**
(parents' information service)
0800 018 2138
www.youngminds.org.uk

MIGRAINE AND PAIN

- **Action On Pain**
0845 603 15 93
www.action-on-pain.co.uk
- **Headache Matters**
www.headachematters.co.uk
- **Migraine Action Association**
01536 461 333
www.migraine.org.uk
- **Migraine Trust**
020 7436 1336
www.migrainetrust.org
- **Pain Concern**
01620 822 572
www.painconcern.org.uk
- **Pain Relief Foundation**
0151 529 5820
www.painrelieffoundation.org.uk

MUSCLES, BONES AND JOINTS

- **Arthritis Care**
0808 800 4050
www.arthritiscare.org.uk
- **Arthritis Research Campaign**
0870 850 5000
www.arc.org.uk

- **Back Care**
0870 950 0275
www.backcare.org.uk
- **Brittle Bone Society**
0800 028 2459
www.brittlebone.org
- **Children's Chronic Arthritis Association**
01905 745 595
www.ccaa.org.uk
- **LUPUS UK**
01708 731 251
www.lupusuk.com
- **National Ankylosing Spondylitis Society**
01435 873 527
www.nass.co.uk
- **National Osteoporosis Society**
0845 450 0230
www.nos.org.uk
- **National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society**
0845 458 3969
www.rheumatoid.org
- **UK Gout Society**
www.ukgoutsociety.org
- **Epilepsy Action**
0808 800 5050
www.epilepsy.org.uk
- **Epilepsy Bereaved**
01235 772 852
www.epilepsybereaved.org.uk
- **Huntingdon's Disease Association**
020 7223 7000
www.hda.org.uk
- **National Society for Epilepsy**
01494 601 400
www.epilepsyse.org.uk
- **Neurological Alliance**
020 7463 2074
www.neural.org.uk
- **Motor Neurone Disease Association**
08457 62 62 62
www.mndassociation.org
- **MS Resource Centre**
0800 783 0518
www.msrc.co.uk
- **MS Society**
0808 800 8000
www.msociety.org.uk
- **MS Trust**
01462 476 700
www.mstrust.org.uk
- **Muscular Dystrophy Campaign**
020 7720 8055
www.muscular-dystrophy.org/
- **Parkinson's Disease Society**
0808 800 0303
www.parkinsons.org.uk

NEUROLOGICAL CONDITIONS

- **Alzheimer's Society**
0845 300 0336
www.alzheimers.org.uk

- **Brain and Spine Help line**
0808 808 1000
www.brainandspine.org.uk

- **Progressive Supranuclear Palsy Association**
www.pspeur.org

NHS INFORMATION

- **Directory of GP Websites**
www.click-for-health.com
- **NHS Direct**
08 45 46 47
www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
- **NHS Website**
www.nhs.uk

OBESITY AND EATING DISORDERS

- **Eating Disorders Association**
0870 770 3221
www.edauk.com
- **National Obesity Forum**
0115 846 2109
www.nationalobesityforum.org.uk
- **TOAST-UK**
01279 866 010
www.toast-uk.org.uk
- **Weight Wise**
www.bdaweightwise.com

OLDER PEOPLE'S HEALTH

- **Age Concern**
0800 00 99 66
www.ageconcern.org.uk
- **Alzheimer's Society**
0845 300 0336
www.alzheimers.org.uk
- **Help The Aged**
0808 800 6565
www.helptheaged.org.uk

ORAL HEALTH

- **Dental Health Foundation**
0845 063 1188
www.dentalhealth.org.uk
- **UK and Ireland Dental Health Guide**
www.dentalnetuk.com

PATIENTS AND CARERS

- **Patients Association**
0845 608 4455
www.patients-association.com
- **Carers UK**
020 7490 8818
www.carersuk.org

RESPIRATORY CONDITIONS

- **Action Asthma**
www.actionasthma.co.uk
- **Asthma UK**
08457 01 02 03
www.asthma.org.uk
- **British Lung Foundation**
08458 50 50 20
www.lunguk.org
- **Cystic Fibrosis Trust**
0845 859 1000
www.cftrust.org.uk

SKIN

- **Acne Support Group**
0870 870 2263
www.stopspots.org
- **LUPUS UK**
01708 731 251
www.lupusuk.com

■ National Eczema Society

0870 241 3604

www.eczema.org**■ Psoriasis Association**

0845 676 0076

www.psoriasis-association.org.uk**■ Skin Care Campaign**www.skincarecampaign.org**SMOKING CESSATION****■ ASH (Action on Smoking and Health UK)**

020 7739 5902

www.ash.org.uk**■ QUIT**

0800 00 22 00

www.quit.org.uk**■ The Time Is Right**www.thetimeisright.co.uk**TRAVEL MEDICINE and HEALTH****■ Malaria**www.malariahotspots.co.uk**■ National Travel Health Network and Centre**www.nathnac.org**■ Travel Health**www.travelhealth.co.uk**VACCINES****■ UK Vaccine Group**

Information for the public on vaccines

www.uvig.org**■ APMSD**

General Information about vaccines for Children, Adults and Travel

www.apmsd.co.uk**WOMEN'S HEALTH****■ Amarant Trust (menopause info)**

01293 413 000

www.amarantmenopausetrust.org.uk**■ Endometriosis SHE Trust (UK)**

08707 743 664/5

www.shetrust.org.uk**■ Family Planning Association**

0845 310 1334

www.fpa.org.uk**■ HRT Info**www.hrtinfo.co.uk**■ National Association for Premenstrual Syndrome**

0870 777 2177

www.pms.org.uk**■ National Childbirth Trust**

0870 444 8707

www.nctpregnancyandbabycare.com**■ National Endometriosis Society**

0808 808 2227

www.endo.org.uk**■ Women's Health**

0845 125 5254

www.womenshealthlondon.org.uk**■ Women's Health Information**www.womens-health.co.uk

Who produced this booklet?

This booklet was originally developed as part of the first Ask About Medicines Week in 2003. It was so popular that a second edition has been produced, with updated information and even more valuable advice to help you make informed decisions about your health and the medicines you may be taking.

Ask about Medicines and its annual campaign Ask About Medicines are initiatives of AAMW Ltd, an independent company limited by guarantee. A wide range of organisations including voluntary, professional, commercial and statutory bodies have come together as partners to support these initiatives.

The Directors of AAMW Ltd are David Dickinson of PECMI, Joanne Shaw of Medicines Partnership (who chairs the Board) and Melinda Letts, chair of the CSM's Patient Information Working Group and immediate past chair of the Long-term Medical Conditions Alliance.

This booklet has been produced in partnership with the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI), who also covered the costs. The pharmaceutical industry regularly provides non-promotional information about medical conditions and treatment options and regulated information about individual medicines.

The Editorial Board for this revised edition consisted of Ruth Carlyle of Macmillan Cancer Relief, Sheelagh Donovan of Age Concern England, Beverley van der Molen of the Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust, David Taylor of South London and the Maudsley NHS Trust, Mary Teasdale of Rethink, Dave Titcomb of Pfizer, Martina Bohn for the ABPI and Melinda Letts for Ask About Medicines. We are also grateful for the help and advice given to us in the preparation of the first edition of this booklet by Anne Joshua, National Pharmacist Advisor at NHS Direct Online, and Simon O'Neil, Head of Care Developments at Diabetes UK, the leading charity for people with diabetes. We also acknowledge the contribution of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency to the current edition.

NB. The views expressed by the information sources detailed in this booklet do not necessarily reflect the views of the individual authors, partners or publishers involved in its development.

An interactive version of this booklet with links to all of the websites listed, can be found at www.askaboutmedicines.org. Printable copies can be downloaded from the same address or from www.abpi.org



Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry

