



WELLELDER

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A community trust providing specialist counselling for older people from Wellington through to Kāpiti

Taking care with medicine

As we get older many of us have increasing prescriptions for medicine. Living with these raise challenges for many clients at WellElder.

In particular it is important to be careful that when we are prescribed something new, or by another Doctor (such as a locum or specialist), that we specifically ask for information about what previous medicine(s) we should keep taking.

It is too easy to accumulate multiple prescriptions for different conditions, and not adjust usage of medicines with changing circumstances. This can lead to unwelcome side effects, and problems such as confusion and increased risk of falls.

This includes over-the-counter medicines and supplements – it is always useful to be clear with Doctors what other things you are regularly taking.



As consumers it is important to be aware of the impacts of medicines we take - obviously they have been prescribed to improve some condition or health concern. If we are concerned that we are not achieving the expected result, or experiencing unexpected side effects, it is important to follow up.

WellElder provides low cost counselling for older people

In 2018 we held 989 individual counselling sessions and ran 47 group sessions for 317 clients.

- *We rely on a DHB contract to help fund our counselling services.*
- *We ask clients to contribute towards the cost of counselling as they can, from \$10.*
- *Donations and additional funding are necessary to cover the full cost.*

As well as going back to the Doctor (or whoever prescribed them), it can be useful to seek advice from a pharmacist. Also, remember we can always seek another opinion from another Doctor if we want to get another perspective.

People can experience different reactions to medicines, do not rely on accounts from friends or family of what they may have experienced.

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There have been extraordinary developments in use of pharmaceuticals, and new and different drugs are available all the time. So, if something appears to not work as we expect, there may be new options that were not available when it was first prescribed. For instance, asthma medication is a good example of this – over the years there have been an increasing range of products available to care for different situations. So sometimes take stock and check out that what we are getting is still the most useful.

Making up multiple medications into easy to use daily packs will help keep clear about what we are taking – and gives us a check about where we are up to at any time. Daily packs can be purchased for us to use ourselves, and most chemists will make up prescriptions into packs for people to use.

In short, it's very important to:

- Check we are clear about what different medication is prescribed for, and its expected result.
- Check what previous medications we should continue to take, or which to stop.
- If we notice side effects, or medicines not having the expected result, seek professional advice.

Become part of the WellElder community in Wellington.... 

Signup for information and invitations to events to support WellElder

Name: _____ Email: _____

Donate to us at 94 Riddiford Street Newtown, or by direct debit to bank account 06-0574-0223422-00 (ANZ Kilbirnie)

We are a registered charity (CC31682) – Your donations are tax deductible