

COMMONWEALTH PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION

MEDICINES FOR CHILDREN

A TOOLKIT FOR PHARMACISTS TO SUPPORT
THE CARE OF CHILDREN





COMMONWEALTH PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION

MEDICINES FOR CHILDREN TOOLKIT

This Toolkit contains:

- An Overview pg 1
- Acknowledgements pg 1
- Information to support Patients
& Health Professionals pg 2
- Information for Parents, Guardians
Carers & Child (when old enough) pg 3
- Supporting Children when using medicines pg 4
- Other Tips for Pharmacists pg 5
- References pg 5
- Disclaimer pg 5



COMMONWEALTH PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION

MEDICINES FOR CHILDREN TOOLKIT

OVERVIEW

The provision of medicines of good quality could be stated as one of the highest priorities in healthcare. An important supplementary consideration is their proper use.

The Commonwealth Pharmaceutical Association (CPA) recognises the importance of the rational use of medicines particularly in children.

In many emerging nations it is often the case that there is a smaller range of products specifically manufactured for use by children. Further, as dose may be dependent on age and size, quantities to be administered may routinely vary and thus be more difficult to measure. Additionally, other features may be prominent, for example, the different response of children, particularly the very young, to treatment due to immature body systems, the need to avoid sugar in formulations intended for longer term use and the need to make the medicine palatable.

In 2006 a joint WHO/UNICEF initiative addressed the lack of a suitable range of medicines, in specific formulations for children, particularly in countries where distribution and storage of medicines is problematic and where there is limited support from healthcare professionals.

CPA believes pharmacists can and should make a significant contribution to the activities needed to ameliorate these problems.

CPA intends to give prominence to the expertise that pharmacists can bring to the support of treatment of children. This will include the development of specific projects and to the spread of good practice in this context.

Commonwealth Pharmacy Day 2007 was an appropriate occasion on which to announce this work. It is a strategy to encourage pharmacists to exercise stewardship for the safe and rational use of medicines. The first step is an aide memoire on those aspects of treatment of children that pharmacists consider in general or when dealing with individual patients.

This toolkit is being recommended for use in association with Good Pharmacy Practice Guidelines and any other governance documents in the specific countries.

Acknowledgements

The assistance of Dr. John Farwell PhD, FRPharmS in compiling this document is acknowledged with thanks.

Commonwealth Pharmaceutical Association

www.commonwealthpharmacy.org

PHARMACISTS SUPPORT PATIENTS & OTHER HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Issues specific to the local situation in which each pharmacist works may influence their participation in this initiative.

However, all pharmacists everywhere are encouraged to provide support to other health professionals and to the patient directly in the context of:

- choice and correct use of the most appropriate medicine(s)
- supply of the medicines in a form suitable for the patient, their circumstances, and for the duration of the treatment
- the necessary information for administration, including special directions or warnings
- the proper use of any devices to enable the medicine to be administered safely and accurately according to the prescriber's recommendations
- other supporting information relating to their health, for example on diet in diabetes, on immunisation against infections, on minimising mosquito contact in malaria.

In special circumstances, pharmacists may be required to calculate dosages for neonates, reconstitute dosage forms, compound preparations or make dilutions of already prepared formulations. Adherence to the principles of Good Pharmacy Practice is of particular importance.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS, GUARDIANS, CARERS OR CHILD (WHEN OLD ENOUGH)

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Pharmacists are encouraged to ensure that the parent, guardian, carer or child (when old enough) should understand clearly, for each medicine:

- the purpose of the treatment
- how the medicine is to be used; the amount of each dose, the time each dose should be taken, for how many days and the importance of completing a course of treatment
- how to accurately measure each dose and to ensure it is given properly particularly if uncommon techniques, such as using an inhaler, are involved
- what to do if a dose is missed or potentially lost in part or whole, for example the child vomits shortly after the medicine has been given
- options and limitations of techniques used to encourage the child to take the medicine, such as mixing the medicine with other materials like flavoured drinks particularly when the active ingredient has an unpleasant taste
- any administration techniques that should be avoided with some formulations; for example, crushing or dissolving controlled release tablets
- what unwanted effects might occur and what to do about them
- how to check that the medicine is fit to be used, how to store it safely to maintain its quality and prevent contamination
- the importance of only using the medicine for the child for whom it was intended and how to dispose of any left unused
- any limitation or consequence of using this medicines simultaneously with any others that the child might use, including remedies bought over the counter

- how to use any equipment employed to monitor treatment, for example, blood testing in diabetes, and interpret the results
- what to do if other symptoms develop, for example the child develops a cold, flu or chicken pox
- the problems and some possible solutions that may arise when children are faced with taking medicines for prolonged periods
- to ensure that medicines are stored in an appropriate place that is out of the reach of children

OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINES

The information provided above is also applicable.

Parents, guardians or carers, should be advised not to administer over-the-counter medicines to babies unless recommended by a paediatrician.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN USING MEDICINES

In addition to the routine checks that pharmacists carry out in the context of any medicine issued to a patient i.e. that it is the right medicine in the right form, dose, frequency and duration for the right patient, they will also be prepared to offer help and information on all issues in respect to specific individual medicines or the treatment in general.

Whilst some of these may also be addressed by other healthcare staff involved in the treatment of a patient, pharmacists will be ready to obtain the information required to support those caring for the child.

OTHER TIPS FOR PHARMACISTS

- Pharmacists should be committed to paying particular attention to the proper use of medicines in children
- Health authorities and health professionals should be made aware of the special attention to be given to medicines for children by pharmacists
- Every effort should be made at ensuring that adequate stocks of medicines for children are available in your pharmacy
- Where a medicine is not being dispensed in the original package, child resistant containers should be used wherever possible
- Parents, guardians and carers must be advised of the importance of keeping prescription and over-the-counter medicines out of the reach of children
- The title page of this toolkit can be enlarged and used as a poster in the participating pharmacies to alert clients of your special focus on children
- Any feedback from parents or health professionals to this initiative should be made to admin@commowealthpharmacy.org

References

WHO/UNICEF (September 2006) *Report - Essential Medicines for Children Expert Consultation*
<http://www.who.int/medicines/publications/UNICEFconsultation.pdf>

How to give medicine to children
www.fda.gov/opacom/lowlit/medchld.html

20 Tips to help prevent medical errors in children
www.ahrq.gov/consumer/20tipkid.htm

Helping children take medicine
www.seattlechildrens.org/child_health_safety/pdf/flyers/PE398.pdf

Helping kids take their medicine
www.calgaryschild.com/content/view/180/23/

Medicines... take amemo! Tips to help you remember
www.ich.ucl.ac.uk/factsheets/children/C060047/index.html

Disclaimer

The content of this toolkit is for information purposes only. It is general in nature and not intended to be specific for any individual or replace personal treatment or advice given by appropriately qualified health practitioners.

The Commonwealth Pharmaceutical Association (CPA) does not suggest completeness of this information and does not endorse any organisation, product or therapy.

June 2007

Commonwealth Pharmaceutical Association, 1 Lambeth High Street London SE1 7JN United Kingdom

www.commonwealthpharmacy.org

