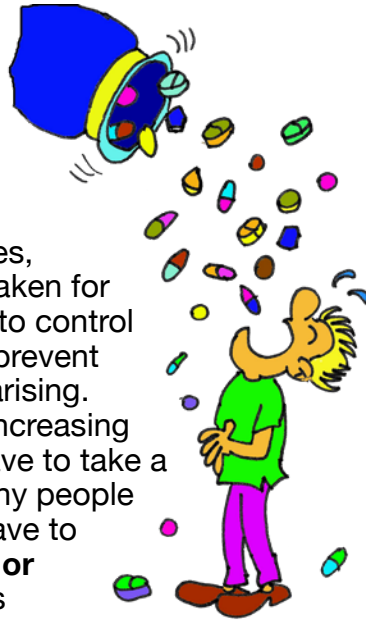


Deprescription

Do you take more than five medicines each day?

In our country, people live longer and longer and as they get older, chronic health problems start to appear. In many cases, medicines must be taken for long periods of time to control the symptoms or to prevent complications from arising. This means that an increasing number of people have to take a lot of medicines. Many people over the age of 65 have to take **five medicines or more every day**: this situation is known as **polypharmacy**. Some people even have to take 10 or more medicines each day (hyperpolypharmacy).



We know that the more medicines people take, the more likely they are to experience side effects (falls, confusion, memory loss, muscle aches, dry mouth or constipation) or interactions between the different drugs and, also, to make mistakes or forget to take their medication. Polypharmacy can even cause people to be hospitalized.

Besides this, our metabolism changes with old age: absorption, body distribution, the elimination of medicines all change ... and this can lead to harmful amounts of drugs accumulating in the blood.

Deprescription

Over the last few years, **DEPRESCRIPTION** has been recommended to guarantee the correct use of medicines and improve health and safety. This means reducing or withdrawing medicines which are no longer

necessary or when the risks outweigh the benefits.

Most elderly patients are prescribed medicines by several doctors (their GP and other specialists) and in various places (CAP primary healthcare centre, emergency department, private health insurance, etc.). It is important to see your doctor and CAP nursing team periodically so that they can review the medication that you are taking. They can check that you are taking the most suitable medicines, in the right doses, in the best conditions and that they do not interact adversely with each other. They can tell you which medicines to keep taking, which ones to stop and which ones to take in lower doses. If they withdraw medicines, they will explain how to stop taking them: often you should come off them gradually and you should have a follow-up or a blood test during the withdrawal period. Your pharmacist can also help you with any queries that you may have.



There are four groups of medicines that are known to be **overused**: sleeping pills, stomach liners, anti-inflammatories and cholesterol-lowering drugs. If you take one of these drugs, check with your doctor or nurse to see if you can stop taking it.

In conclusion, we can say that no medicines should be taken "all your life". When you start a new treatment, tell your family doctor and check periodically whether you still need to take it.

Never stop taking a drug without talking to your doctor first.