

Transforming Medication Safety in Northern Ireland

Factsheet for healthcare staff

Oct 2025

5 Moments for Medication Safety

The '5 Moments for Medication Safety' patient engagement tool supports the 'Know Check Ask' campaign by highlighting the 5 key moments in the medication process where actions by patients and their carers can reduce the risk of avoidable medication related harm.

The '5 moments for Medication Safety' tool encourages patients to pause to know their medicines, check for accuracy, and ask questions.

This helps embed safer habits, open communication and shared decision-making into everyday healthcare practice when starting, taking, adding, reviewing or stopping a medication.



<https://online.hscni.net/our-work/pharmacy-and-medicines-management/medicines-management-programmes/medication-safety/5-moments-for-medication-safety-coming-soon/>

'Everyone has a role to play to ensure safe and effective use of medicines'



Know, Check, Ask

Medicines are the most commonly used medical intervention in Northern Ireland (NI), and at any one time 70% of the population is taking prescribed or purchased medicines, vitamins or supplements to treat or prevent ill health.

Every year in NI it is estimated that 11.7 million medication errors occur.

All medication errors are potentially avoidable and can therefore be greatly reduced or even prevented. Preventing errors and the harm that results requires putting systems and procedures in place to ensure the right patient, receives the right medication, at the right dose, via the right route, at the right time.

Everyone has a role to play in medication safety and medication safety is everyone's responsibility.

Healthcare staff can help to improve medication safety by using the 3-step approach.



KNOW - the medications you are prescribing, supplying or administering. What do they do, what benefits do they have and what are the side-effects?

CHECK - that they are right for each individual patient, based on their health conditions, monitoring results and any other medications they are taking.

ASK - a colleague if you need to clarify anything about a patient's medication, diagnosis or think something is not quite right.

Ask the patient if they understand the information you have given to them and suggest that keeping a list of their medicines can help them.

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My Medicines List

The 'My Medicines List' is a resource to encourage patients or carers to be more involved in their medication management.

Versions are available online to print and fill in manually, or to edit and store digitally. Share the link with patients or carers via email or text.

The patient or carer will complete the 'My Medicines List', with the support of a healthcare professional, as required.

Keeping a medication list will help patients or carers to **KNOW** all their medicines, **CHECK** they are using them correctly, and act as a prompt to **ASK** for help.

Healthcare staff can refer patients and carers to these resources and encourage them to keep an up-to-date list of medication and to bring the list to all appointments with healthcare professionals.



Scan the QR code for more info



Resources for use by healthcare staff in their workplace can be found at,
<https://online.hscni.net/our-work/pharmacy-and-medicines-management/medicines-management-programmes/medication-safety/know-check-ask/campaign-resources/>.

British and Irish signed animations are available for patients and can be found at <https://online.hscni.net/our-work/pharmacy-and-medicines-management/medicines-management-programmes/medication-safety/know-check-ask/>.

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