

Top tips for Pharmacy Staff about what a person with sight loss may find helpful in using the Pharmacy.

Simple things you can do for me, as a person with sight loss, to help me understand and take my medicines effectively.

These ‘tips’ have been compiled from information and suggestions gathered from Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust Pharmacy department.

The advice in this guide is complementary to the NHS Accessible Information Standard (August 2016) please see Further Information below for more details.

I am likely to need information in different ways to help me independently read and manage my medicines safely.

- Don't assume anything about how well I can see – ask me!
- Make me feel comfortable to discuss my needs with you.
- Ask me how I prefer the information to be given to me.

Pharmacy environment:

- Bright colour contrasted lines on the floor can help me navigate through the Pharmacy.
- Use colour contrasted guide rails to help me navigate around the pharmacy and make sure the routes are not blocked by chairs or other obstacles.

- Position signs on doorways and at the Pharmacy counters (for example 'IN' and 'OUT' hatches) at eye level so I can view them up close.
- Tell me when you are looking at me and ready to talk because I may not be able to see you.
- Provide me assistance to seating whilst I wait for my prescription, if I need it.
- If I have a guide dog
 - Don't play with my dog without asking first, because my dog is working.
 - Ask me if my guide dog needs a drink of water.

Communication:

- Use an audio calling system if you want to speak to me as I might not be able to see a visual display.
- Allow me extra time to respond to your call when my prescription is ready.
- Even if I am accompanied by someone else, speak to me FIRST unless I request otherwise.
- Introduce yourself and tell me who you are, your role and what tasks you will be performing. I might not be able to identify a uniform or badge.

Information:

- Please ask me what format I need information in so I can read medicine labels and leaflets. Commonly required formats include large print, Braille, audio CD or email.
- Offer me large font leaflets supplementary to the standard ones provided by the medicines manufacturer (see advice under labelling).
- When talking to me about use of my medicines, I may prefer to hold the medication container as I may find this easier to understand your instructions (for example, eye drop bottles or inhalers).
- Offer me a personalised dosing schedule chart in a format I can read.

- Offer to dictate a contact telephone number onto my smartphone or audio recorder, to obtain further advice as I may not be able to read the telephone number on the dispensing label.
- Make a record of my personalised requirements including accessible format needs on your patient record system.

Labelling:

- Ask me if I use large print and if so, what font size I need to read the dispensing label. Make sure large font size is available, and that it is lower case, left aligned and in a clear colour contrast (for example, black on white).
- Offer to send me the information on the dispensing label by email if I cannot read large print or find email format more accessible.
- Please ask me if I need the information in braille format if I cannot use any of the above formats.

Patient Information Leaflet (PIL):

Did you know the X-PIL service ensures that patient information leaflets (PILs) supplied with medicines are accessible to everyone, including those with sight problems?

Help me use the X-PIL service by providing me with an accessible written or recorded version of the:

- name of the medicine
- medicine's product code number

For more information visit www.medicines.org.uk/emc/xpil

In addition to ensuring key medicine label information is provided in an accessible format, offer me supplementary ways to identify my medicines, for example

- using different coloured highlighter pens for me to differentiate the different types of medicines.
- using two rubber bands tied around the medicine container that I need to take twice a day, or a long rubber

- band with three knots in it could be tied around the medicine container that I need to take three times a day.
- using paper clips, dispensing flags, sellotape 'flags', ribbons, string, different coloured/textured stickers
 - Provide me with important information (such as expiry date or special storage conditions) and offer to help me identify the medicine that requires this. I may wish to record a voice note on my phone, receive an email from you. In addition, for example, I may wish to mark the medication container with a marker pen or using a rubber band to identify fridge storage requirements.

Other considerations:

- Ask me if I need a non-child resistant cap for medicines containers as I may not be able to see the grooves and use it effectively.
- If my tablets need to be halved, consider offering to half them for me as I may not be able to use a tablet cutter.
- If you are supplying me a bottle of oral medicine to reconstitute at home, ask me if I am able to make it up at home. If I am able, ask what help I need to do this, for example, using a marker pen or a dispensing flag, to help me reconstitute the bottle at home. Offer me the opportunity to return at a later date to collect a reconstituted bottle.
- Offer me options of helpful medication compliance aids that might be useful to me, for example, easy grip bottle openers, aids for eye drops and inhalers.
- Consider offering me a Monitored Dosage System with Braille for my oral medication.

Further Information

The NHS Accessible Information Standard covers NHS related pharmacy work. It ensures disabled people receive easily accessible information and support.

Comprehensive information on implementing the NHS Accessible Information Standard is at:

www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/accessibleinfo/

Health professionals with any queries about the above information can email: england.patientsincontrol@nhs.net

NHS England also provides a telephone contact point for patients and members of the public with queries about the standard:
0300 311 22 33.

For general advice and support if you are providing a service to someone who is blind or partially sighted, or if you have sight loss yourself, or know someone who is, Contact Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) for information and problem solving:

Telephone helpline: 0303 123 9999

email: helpline@rnib.org.uk

website: www.rnib.org.uk

The pharmacy team at Moorfields Eye Hospital have created an initiative to promote and encourage good eye drop compliance and provide support to patients, carers and staff regarding best techniques for administering eye drops. Find out more and watch the Know Your Drops video at: www.moorfields.nhs.uk/knowyourdrops

Authors: Amani El Bushra, Sarah Thomas, Fiona Chui. Pharmacy Department, Moorfields Eye Hospital. Contributions from: Nina Barnett, Consultant pharmacist for Older People, Medicines Use and Safety Team, NHS Specialist Pharmacy Service and Hugh Huddy, Policy Manager, Royal National Institute for Blind people.
July 2017