

YOUR HEALTH

**Get 'Greener' with your medicines;
ask for your *FREE 'Medicines Use Review'***



Did you know that last year in mid Essex £2 million was wasted on medicines dispensed but never used.

Once medicines have been dispensed they cannot be recycled and have to be thrown away. Nearly half the population in the UK receive repeat prescriptions and 75% of all prescribed medicines are estimated to be repeats – this means a potentially huge waste if unwanted medicines are dispensed. Also, the cost of drugs you get from your GP has increased by 60 per cent in real terms over the last decade, so this makes it even more important they are not wasted.

Studies have suggested that up to half of patients do not take their prescribed medicines to best effect. Some people miss doses or do not take medicines at the correct time of day. Others don't take them at all, maybe because they are not sure why they were prescribed or are getting side-effects. Where medicines are not taken, patients don't get the benefits. But nowadays the emphasis is not on blaming the patient for not taking their medicines. It is more about finding out about you or the person you care for, and creating a partnership so that treatment can work for everyone as an individual.

This is why the NHS is encouraging people who are regularly taking more than one medicine to have a free **Medicines Use Review**

(MUR) at their local pharmacy. The MUR is to find out more about the medicines you are taking, pick up any problems with them and improve their effectiveness. If you think you, or someone you care for could benefit from an MUR, speak to your local pharmacist. The MUR is completely confidential. You will sit in a private area within your pharmacy to discuss your needs. If the MUR is for someone you care for, if they agree, you can also be present to help make sure they have been understood and you know what has been discussed.

Even if you decide not to ask for an MUR, you could still look at what medicines are stocked up in your cupboards. Anything you do not need should be taken to your local pharmacy for them to dispose of safely.

Top tips for being 'greener' with your medication

1. Do not ask for a repeat prescription from your surgery unless you actually need it.
2. When filling in the repeat form, make sure you only tick the boxes for the medicines you actually need.
3. Tell your pharmacist or doctor if you, or the person you care for, has stopped taking any medicines – these can then be removed from your repeat prescription form.