

Patient information

Drugs after critical illness



It is very important for all patients to know what medication they are taking and why they are taking it.

After critical illness, you may be on a bewildering variety of medicines (or none at all!)

It is very important that you:

- Know what you are taking
- Know why you are taking it
- Know when you should take each dose
- Know how long the treatment is likely to continue
- Don't stop any medicine without talking to your doctor

It is very helpful to us if you bring a list of your medicines to clinic. We will liaise with your GP and consultant about whether you should continue a drug or when you should be able to stop it.

For instance, it is quite common for patients to have been started on anti-depressants during recovery. This is an important aid to recovery and does not mean you are depressed, or need long-term treatment. Although a few patients do get genuinely depressed, most people find their psychological well-being improves along with their physical health. Stopping antidepressants needs to be done carefully at the appropriate time and involves cutting down gradually. Your GP will be skilled at doing this and we can advise the right time to start the process.

Some patients are started on heart or respiratory medication which can be reviewed after a few months. Sometimes it is not clear to others why this treatment was started and whether you still need it – so we will review it in clinic and advise your GP accordingly. Painkillers can usually be reduced safely as pain gets less – but if you are given aspirin check why you have been given it – it may be not be for pain!

In general when taking medication you should:

- Not take any other medication, even tablets bought over the counter, without checking with a doctor / pharmacist

- Check whether it is OK to take alcohol – and in any case don't drink too much, it won't help your recovery
- Not let anyone else take your tablets
- Stick to the dose you are advised to take by your doctor

Remember – if in doubt seek advice from your doctor or pharmacist!

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the disabledgo website link below:

<http://www.disabledgo.com/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust/main>