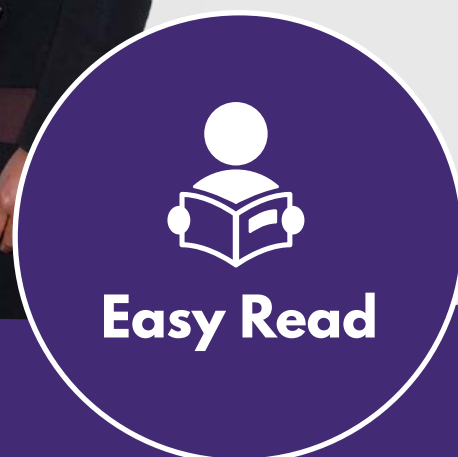# Information about polypharmacy
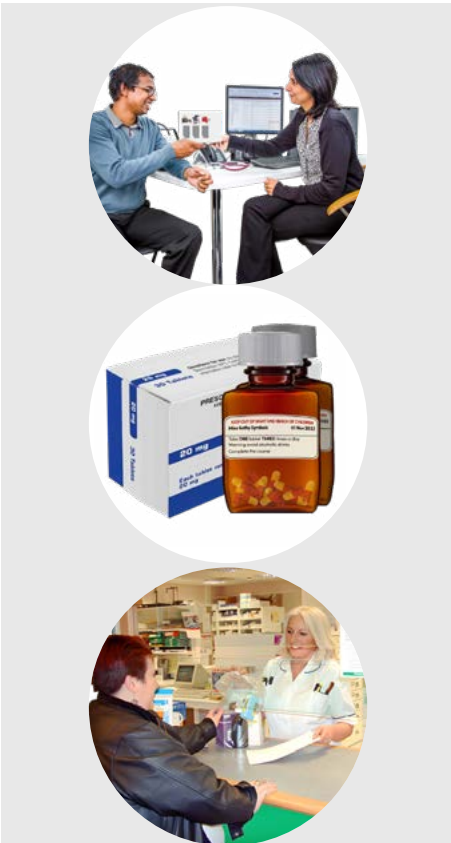
Easy Read

About this information

This information is about **polypharmacy**.

Polypharmacy is when you take 5 or more medicines.

This might be medicines that

• Your doctor told you to take

• You need to take together with other medicines

• You bought at the **pharmacy**.

A **pharmacy** is a shop where you can buy medicines.

There are some **risks** for people with intellectual disability with polypharmacy.

Risks are bad things that could happen when you take medicines.

This information tells you

- What the risks are

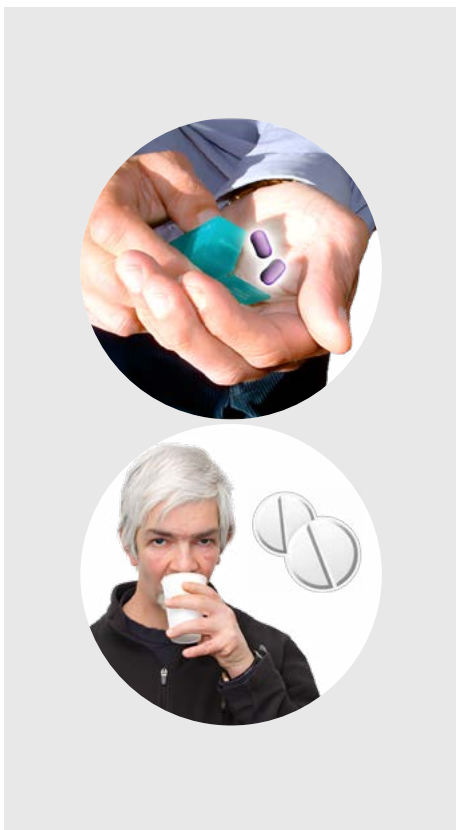- What health services should do to keep you safe.

Risks for people with intellectual disability

Some people with intellectual disability have lots of health issues.

That means you might need to take lots of medicines.

It is important to check often

- What medicines you take

- How you take them.

You can check these things with your doctor or someone you trust.

There can be problems if your medicines are not checked.

People with intellectual disability can have more problems when taking lots of medicines.

This is because medicine information can be hard to understand.
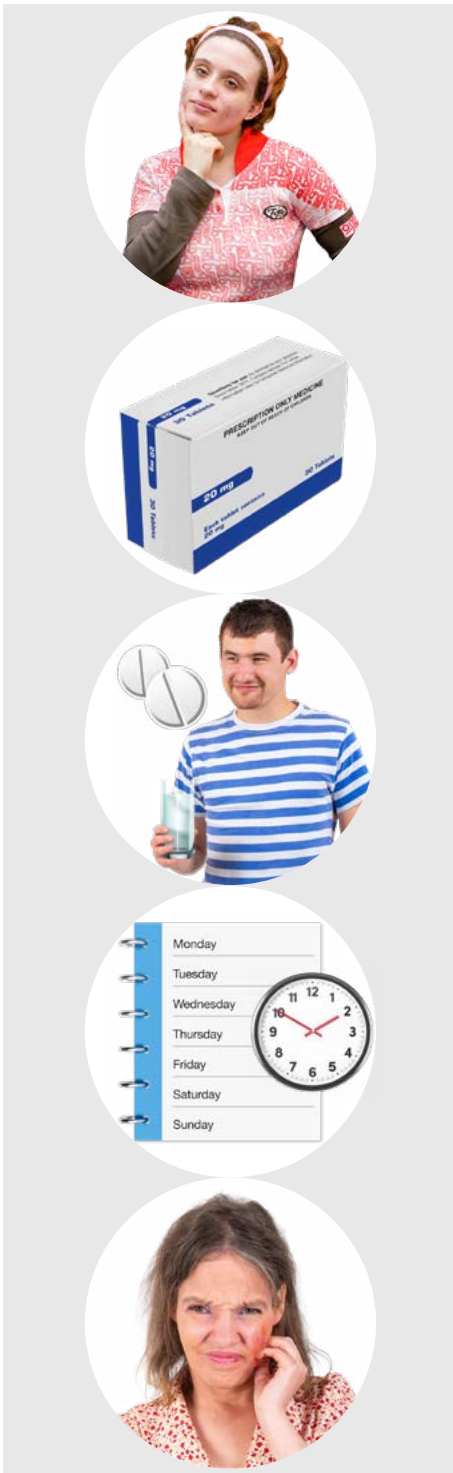
You might find it hard to know

• Why you must take the medicine

• What the medicine is called

• How to take it

• When to take it

• What the **side effects** are.

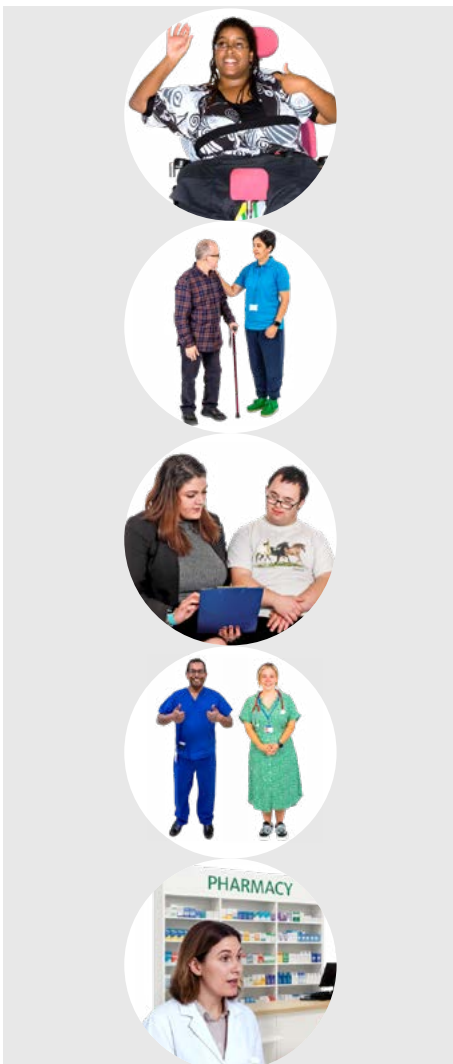**Side effects** are things you can get from a medicine like a rash.

What health services should do

There are things health services should do to keep you safe when you take medicines.

Health services should check your medicines with at least 2 people or services.
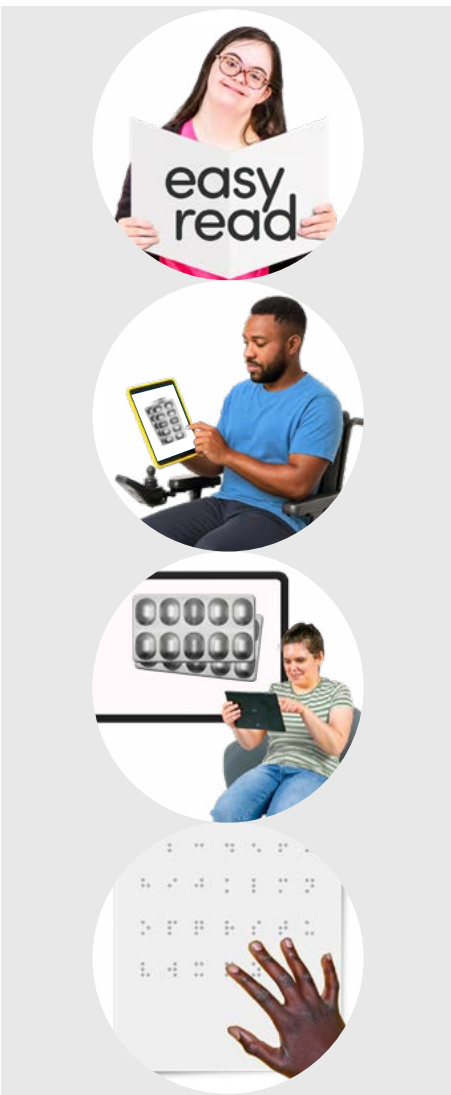

This might be with

- You

- Your carer and supporters

- Your disability service

- Your doctors

- Your pharmacy.

Health services need to make sure you understand your medicines.

They should give you all medicine information in ways you can understand.
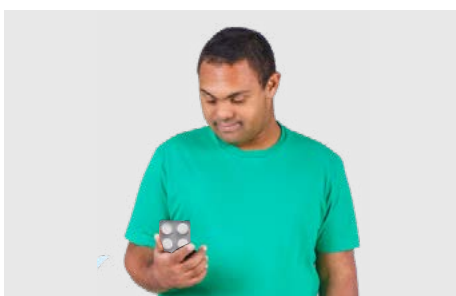

This might be

• Easy Read

• Pictures

• Videos

• **Braille** for people who can not see.

What health services should do when you go home from hospital

Health services need to plan early for when you leave their service.

This is so you know what to do with your medicines when you are back at home.

Health services should give you information about your medicines that says
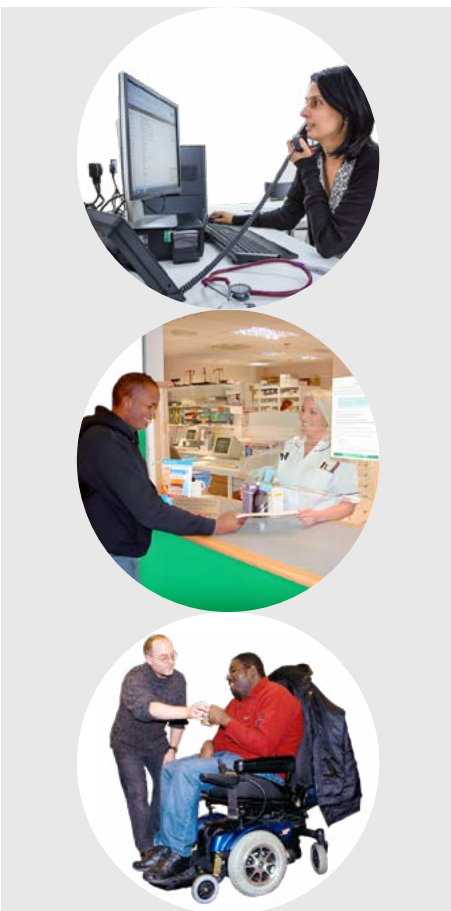
• What they changed about your medicines

• Why they changed the medicines

• Any new medicines you need to take

• Any medicines you need to stop taking.

Health services should talk to you and your supporters about the medicine changes.

They need to make sure you and your support team understand the changes.

Health services should share that information with your health team like your

- Doctor

- Pharmacy

- Support people.

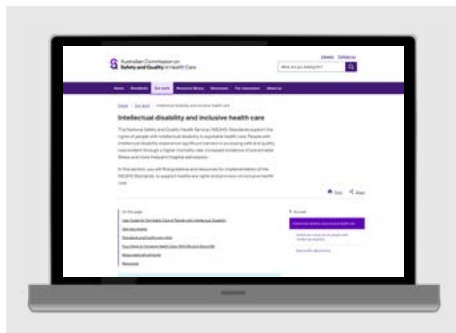This is so your health team can make sure you take the new medicines the right way.

When health services do these things it means they are following **standards of care**.

Standards of care are the rules health services must follow to keep you and others safe.
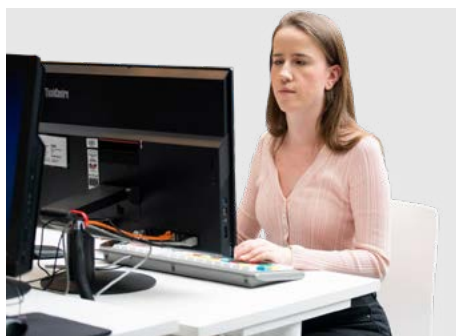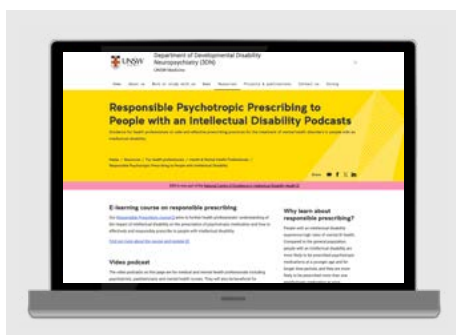
More information

For more information about health care for people with intellectual disability go to

www.safetyandquality.gov.au/ intellectual-disability
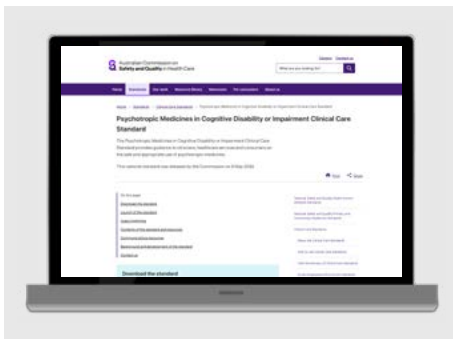

This website is not in Easy Read.

There are other websites not in Easy Read you can go to for more information.

For information about how health workers should give you medicines go to

www.bit.ly/psychotropic-prescribe

To read more about taking **psychotropic medicines** go to

www.bit.ly/psychotropic-meds

Psychotropic medicines are medicines that help you with how you think and feel.
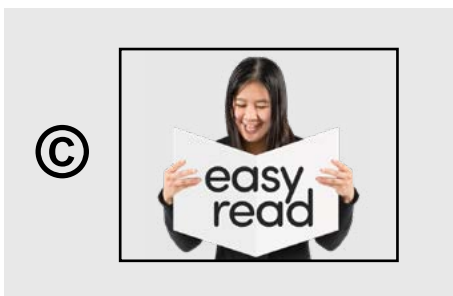
To read a report about being safe with polypharmacy go to

www.bit.ly/med-safety-in-polypharmacy

Who did this Easy Read

Council for Intellectual Disability made this information for the **Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care**.
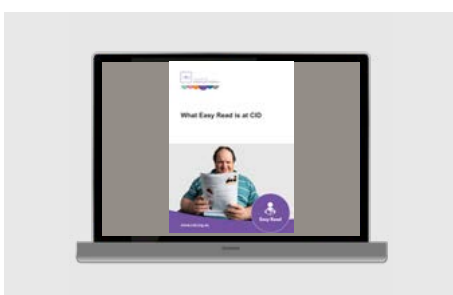
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