



Healthy Bites Episode 32 – Taking multiple medications

Hi, my name is Claire, and I'm a pharmacist at Central Coast Health.

Did you know that about 2 in 5 Australians aged 50 and older, and 2 in 3 Australians aged 75 and older, take five or more medicines every day?

Older Australians who take five or more medicines a day are twice as likely to report a side effect or other medicine problem. They are also seven times more likely to be taking medicines that could interact.

This means that the more medicines you take, the more likely you are to experience medicine problems or mistakes.

Some combinations of medicines are especially problematic. For example, if you are taking several different medicines that can affect your brain and nervous system, you are much more likely to experience drowsiness, confusion, or memory problems. This can lead to falls or serious accidents.

Older people can also be more prone to dizziness, light-headedness, and fainting, especially if taking medicine that also causes these effects (such as blood pressure-lowering medicines, pain relief medicines that contain opioids, and medicines for psychotic conditions).

So, ask your doctor or pharmacist about getting your medicines reviewed regularly, especially if you or someone you care for takes five or more medicines a day.

For some people, taking many different medicines can't be avoided. But minimising the number and some types of medicines that may cause problems for you will help and keep you safe at home for longer!