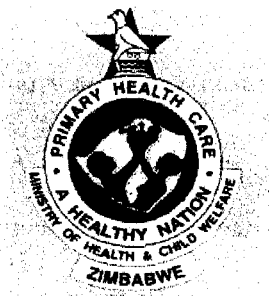


# Pharmaceutical Guide for Village Health Workers



Produced by: Directorate of Pharmacy Services  
Ministry of Health and Child Welfare  
April 2010



**What is a medicine/drug?**

A medicine is any drug or remedy for use in treating, preventing, or alleviating the symptoms of disease

**How must medicines be used?**

- Use medicines that have been prescribed by a health workers or are from an approved sources
- Alternate medicines such as traditional medicines should not be used at the same time with medicines from health facilities
- Do not use a drug after expiry date because;
  - The drug is no longer effective
  - The drug may become toxic
- Patients should follow instructions given by health workers on how they should take their medication. Failure to take the medicines as instructed can result in the disease worsening or even death.
- Patients should always complete the full course of any antibiotics prescribed to them even if they feel better after a few days. Stopping medication before completing the course leads to medicines losing their effectiveness (resistance)
- Patients should not share medicines, Each person should have their own medicines
- Breastfeeding mothers should consult the health care provider before they use any medicines

**Adherence****What is adherence?**

- The extent to which a patient acts in accordance with the prescribed interval and dose of a dosing regimen.

**How can village health workers ensure patient adherence to medication**

- Village health workers can improve patient adherence to medication by:
  - Correct dispensing and labeling of medications
  - Giving adequate verbal instructions
  - Giving adequate counseling to encourage adherence
  - Follow up and support of patients who have been prescribed medications

**Side effects****What is a side effect ?:**

A side effect is an unwanted or adverse effect of a medication given at the usual dose

**What should patients do when they experience side effects?**

- Patients should return to the health facility if they experience any side effects during the time they are taking any medication

### **How to store your medicines**

- Store all medicines in the kit provided
- Protect the drugs against exposure to heat, light, moisture, insects rodents
- Storage conditions that are not recommended may make the medicine lose its effectiveness before the indicated expiry date.
- Store medicines out of the reach of children

### **How to manage your drug stocks**

- Record all receipts and issues in the book provided
  - Record quantity received
  - Have a separate page for each drug you dispense
  - On issuing note down the following
    - Date
    - Name, age and sex of patient
    - Diagnosis/Reason for giving medicine
    - Name and strength of drug supplied
    - Quantity of drug supplied
- Ensure that the drug with the earlier expiry date is used first

### **How to order new stocks of drugs**

Once every month, when submitting report to the clinic or each time any drug is running out:

- Take your record book and whatever quantity is left of the drug to the clinic for resupply.

### **How to dispense medicines**

The aim of good dispensing is to make sure that the;

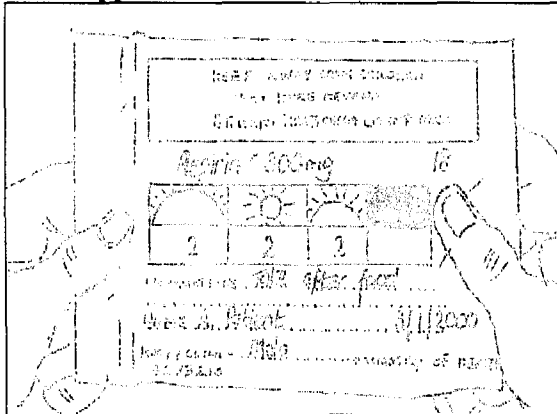
- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- right form of the right drug is given to the</li><li>- right patient in the</li><li>- right dosage and quantity with the</li><li>- right instructions and in the</li><li>- right container.</li></ul> |
|---|

- Use clean containers for dispensing of medicines
- Do not dispense medicines in soft drink bottles or aluminum foil

## How to label medicines given to patients

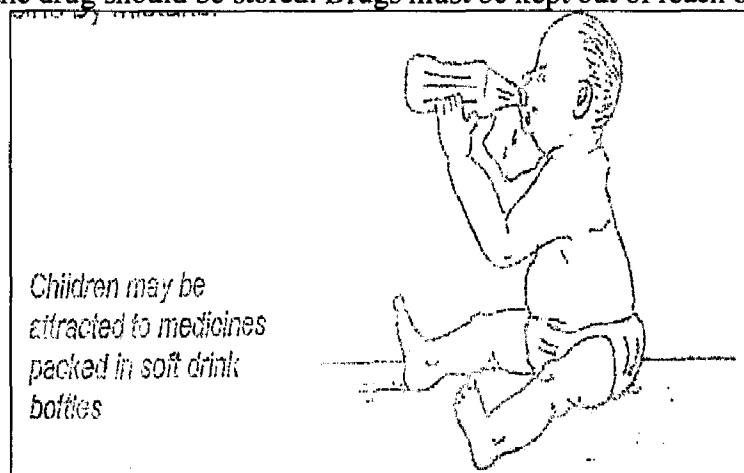
The following information should be on every label

- Name of drug e.g. Paracetamol
- Strength of drug e.g. 500mg
- Quantity of drug supplied
- Instructions of how the drug is to be used
- Name of patient
- Date supplied.



Instructions to patients must include the following:

- How the drug should be taken
- When it should be taken
- How long the treatment should continue
- How the drug should be stored. Drugs must be kept out of reach of children.



- What to do with left-over drugs

### **Warnings**

When the drug should not be taken

What is the maximum dose

Why the full treatment course should be taken

### **Future consultations**

When to come back (or not)

In what circumstances to come earlier

### **Everything clear?**

Ask the patient whether everything is understood

Ask the patient to repeat the most important information

Ask whether the patient has any more questions

### **Side effects**

#### **What is a side effect?**

A side effect can be defined as an unwanted or harmful effect associated with a medication given at a normal dose

#### **What should patients do when they experience side effects?**

- Patients should return to the health facility if they experience any side effects during the time they are taking any medication

### **Notes for some medicines used for common disease conditions**

#### **Cholera.**

Replacement of lost fluids is critical to survival of a patient with cholera

- Use boiled water or water treated with water treatments tablets for making Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS),
- Do not boil any water that has been treated with water treatment tablets as this destroys the chemical that kills the germs
- Throw away any Oral Rehydration Solution not used after 24 hours

### **Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses**

Acute respiratory infections

Management of fever

Neonatal ophthalmia/eye infections

### Health Education

Tetracycline eye ointment

- Wash your hands.
- Do not touch anything with the tip of the tube.
- Take the tube in one hand, and pull down the lower eyelid with the other hand, to make a 'gutter'.
- Bring the tip of the tube as close to the 'gutter' as possible.

- Apply the amount of ointment prescribed.
- Close the eye for two minutes.
- Remove excess ointment with a tissue.
- Clean the tip of the tube with another tissue

#### Antibiotics

- The full course of treatment should be taken even after the patient feels much better
- Use boiled and cooled water for making up solutions from drugs which come in powder form.
- Use reconstituted/diluted antibiotic solutions within the directed time period and discard unused portion. **DO NOT KEEP FOR USE LATER.**
- If pediatric tablets are being given to a mother to give to a mother it is important to explain how to crush tablets between two spoons.

#### Paracetamol

- Drug should not be taken continuously for more than 3 days without referring to a health worker
- Do not give to children under 2 months of age, refer to the nearest health worker
- Do not give more than 3 doses in a day.

#### Cough Mixtures

- Cough mixtures mask symptoms of underlying illness and as such should be discouraged

### **HIV / AIDS & TUBERCULOSIS**

- Antiretrovirals reduce the viral load only, do not cure. Antiretrovirals given during pregnancy can prevent transmission of HIV to unborn baby
- Need to be taken every day for life.
- Skipping doses will result in the medicines losing their effectiveness
- Medication should not be shared between partners – each person must have their own supply
- Medicines should be taken as prescribed and instructions should be strictly followed
- Review dates need to be observed. Prescription may be reviewed and changed according to individual need.
- Report to the Health Facility if you feel anything unusual after taking medicine. Do not stop taking your medicines.

### **TUBERCULOSIS**

- TB can be cured
- Medicines should not be shared
- Follow Direct Observed Treatment

Treatment is for several months and **MUST** be completed  
Failure to complete treatment will lead to relapse and resistance of TB to medicines

## **MALARIA**

Malaria can kill if not treated early

Malaria can be cured

Get tested for malaria if you suspect you have malaria

Coartemether is now the treatment of choice for uncomplicated malaria.

Do not share your tablets with others.

Complete the treatment course.

If you still feel unwell after completing the course, report to the nearest Health Facility immediately.

Pregnant women in malarious should take SP at booking, at 26-28 weeks, and at 34-36 weeks to prevent malaria.