Introduction
A medicines review is a meeting with your doctor, pharmacist or nurse to talk about your medicines.

Your medicines should be reviewed regularly (usually once a year) to check that they are right for you.

Why are medicines reviews needed?
When you are first prescribed a medicine, your doctor, pharmacist and/or nurse checks that it is the best medicine for you. However, things can change, for example:
- You might have developed a side effect from the medicine.
- Your health might have changed, such as developing a long-term condition.
- You might have started taking other additional medicines.
- The guidelines for treating your condition might have changed.
- You may be taking a large number of medications (known as “polypharmacy”).
- A medication you are on may be no longer essential for your health day to day.

All of these factors can affect whether a medicine remains the best choice for you.

What is “polypharmacy”?
You might have heard your doctor, pharmacist or nurse talk about “polypharmacy”. Polypharmacy just means “lots of pharmacy” or, in other words, taking a large number of medicines.

Medicines reviews are particularly useful for people who take lots of medicines so they are sometimes called “polypharmacy reviews”.

What happens at a medicines review?
You will be asked to make an appointment with your doctor, pharmacist or nurse for a medicines review. The review will take between 10 and 30 minutes.

The review will involve the doctor/pharmacist/nurse gathering information from you and from your medical record. This information will be used to check that you are taking the most appropriate medicines.

You will also be able to ask any questions or raise any concerns you have about your medicines.

It might be necessary for the doctor/pharmacist/nurse to recommend some changes to your medicines. The reasons for these changes will be explained to you and you will be asked for your agreement before any changes are made.

What changes to my medicines might be recommended?
Some common changes your doctor/pharmacist/nurse might recommend to your medicines are:
- A medicine may be changed to a form that is easier to take (eg, once a day rather than three times a day).
- A medicine may be started or changed to a newer version.
- A medicine may be stopped.

Do I need to take anything to my medicines review?
It would be very useful if you could bring all of your medicines with you, including any you have bought in a pharmacy or shop. If you buy vitamins or herbal or homoeopathic remedies, please bring them too.

Medicines often have two names (a generic name and a brand name) so having the medicines with you will prevent any confusion if the doctor/pharmacist/nurse calls the medicine by a different name to the name you normally use.

What questions will I be asked at my medicines review?
At the medicines review, you will be asked about how you are getting on with your medicines. Some of the questions you might be asked at your medicines review include:
- Are you taking all of your medicines?
- Are there any you miss out or forget to take?
- Can you take/use the medicine properly?
- Do you feel you are having any side effects from your medicines?
- Do you have any concerns about your medicines?
- Do you take any other medicines, such as those bought in a pharmacy or supermarket?

Where can I get more information?
For further information about your medicines, please contact:
- Your medical practice.
- Your community pharmacy.