

International Self-Care Day: 24 July 2014

Ask your pharmacist for advice on self-medication to help you make smart health choices.

With thousands of over-the-counter (OTC) medicines readily available, many people rely on self-medication to treat common medical ailments, but these are often purchased without advice from a healthcare professional.

International Self-Care Day on 24 July, an initiative by the Self-Medication Manufacturers Association of South Africa (SMASA), is dedicated to promoting pro-active self-care and responsible self-medication 24 hours a day, seven days a week, or 24/7.



OTC medicines are medicines you can buy without a doctor's prescription, but it's important to ask your pharmacist about the risks involved and how best to utilise them effectively.

"Your pharmacist is well placed to provide advice on proper dosing, side effects, adverse drug reactions and possible medication interactions," says Clicks Pharmacist Waheed Abdurahman. "He is trained to offer advice on minor ailments or illness, and can provide advice on supplementation and vitamins in support of a healthy lifestyle. He will also offer generic alternatives, which are cheaper and just as effective."

SMASA advises the following safe and responsible tips for self-medication:

- Medicines should be of proven safety and good quality. If in doubt, check with your healthcare professional.
- Before attempting to self-medicate, users should determine whether their condition and symptoms can be managed through self-care and self-medication, or if expert advice and medical treatment from a healthcare professional is needed.
- Be extra cautious when the elderly, pregnant women and children are involved.
- Always adhere to the directions for dosage and duration of use on the product packaging and enclosed leaflets.
- Speak to a healthcare professional such as a pharmacist, doctor or nurse to obtain as much information as possible to ensure safe and responsible self-medication.

With lifestyle diseases like diabetes, high blood pressure, and cholesterol on the rise, it's also important to have regular health assessments and screening tests, which are covered by most medical aids.

With more than 330 Clicks pharmacies and 135 Clicks clinics across the country, it's easy to make smart choices about your health today. Call 0860 254 257 to find your nearest Clicks Pharmacy or to make an appointment with a Clicks clinic sister.