

## Lesson 1: Introduction

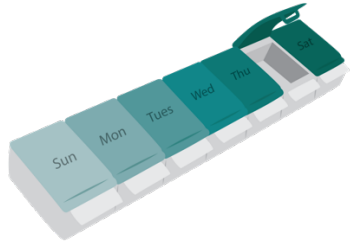

### What are pill organizers and who uses them?

Pill organizers help people:

- Organize their medicines as directed by their doctor
- Be more independent and rely less on caregiver support
- Avoid forgetting or taking too much medicine
- Avoid the need to open and close multiple packets of medicine each day.

### Pill organizer features

Pill organizers can have single or multiple compartments for each day of the week.

Single compartment pill organizer	Multiple compartment pill organizer
	
Important features	Optional features
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ See through food grade plastic</li> <li>✓ Lightweight</li> <li>✓ Printed marks for each day of week</li> <li>✓ Lids on each section.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Braille marks</li> <li>• Colour coding</li> <li>• Lockable lids.</li> </ul>

A person might need a pill organizer if they find it difficult to organize and store their pills and/or remember when to take each pill. A caregiver may also benefit from using a pill organizer to support a person who has difficulty managing their own medicine.

**If a person forgets to take medicine or takes an extra dose of medicine by mistake may be dangerous for their health.**

## Lesson 2: Step 1: Select

### Assess

The first step in providing a pill organizer is to assess the person's needs to select the best product for them. If a person needs assistance to take pills safely, it is important to check if a caregiver is available to help manage their medicine. If a caregiver is not available to support the person to take pills, refer back to doctor or pharmacist.

### Medicine list

Together with the person, complete the medicines list for **all** the pills they are taking. The information is used to help the person to load their pill organizer correctly.

If the person has experienced a reaction to a medicine in the past, describe it. This will assist the pharmacist or doctor to avoid medicines that may cause the person to have an allergic reaction.

The medicine list should be reviewed every 6-12 months or sooner, if the person has changes to their medicines.

The person should also know when to stop or replace a medicine.

Action	Reason
Describe what the pill looks like	Colour, shape, markings, size. It may be helpful to draw around a pill.
Note what the pill treats	Use simple language that is easy to understand
Note dose and how many pills	Calculate how many pills a person should take to match the prescribed dose.
Note who prescribed each medicine	It is helpful to know who prescribed a medicine if you, the person or their caregiver have any questions
Record how many times per day a person should take a medicine.	How often a person should take their medicine will help decide what type of pill organizer is most suitable for them.
Make a note of any special instructions.	Any instructions about how or when to take the pills

Refer the person back to doctor or pharmacist if any information is missing or unclear.

### Lesson 3: Step two: Use

#### Teaching how to use a pill organizer

The second step in providing a pill organizer is to teach the person how to use and take care of the product. Explain to the person that the pill organizer will organize their pills for the week. It will make it quicker and easier to take pills each day. It will also make it easy to see if a dose of pills has been taken or forgotten. Encourage the person to include a caregiver, a second person can help avoid mistakes when loading.

Before showing the person how to load their pill organizer, check the date on their medicine list and ask if there have been any changes. Update the list if necessary.

- Show them how to recognise each pill and
- Load by referring to their medicine list
- Teach the person to load one medicine at a time
- Load the pill organizer for a full week.

Discuss planning a routine together. A routine helps with remembering to take pills.

Remember to check special instructions when planning a routine.

To clean a pill organizer, remove all medicines and wash with warm water and soap. Dry with a soft cloth before replacing medicines.

### Lesson 4: Step three: Follow up

#### Follow up activities

Make sure that the product still meets the person's needs and is in good working order. Follow up within one month for all people who are using pill organizers.

If the person is not using their pill organizer or has problems, ask questions to find out why. You can then try to find a solution together or refer back to doctor or pharmacist.

Encourage the person to ask their doctor or pharmacist to review their medicine list every 6-12 months.

They may need a review more regularly if the person has a condition that is changing quickly.