

## **PRESS COMMENTS**

**1. Does an individual need to always refer to a doctor first before making a decision or taking any types of medicines?**

Yes. This is to prevent any adverse effects which may be harmful to an individual. There are basically two types of medicines – prescribed and non prescribed or over-the-counter (OTC) medicines. Prescribed medicines are medicines authorized by a doctor and you cannot buy these medicines over the counter. Whereas OTC medicines are medicines that can be bought without a doctor's prescription. These medicines include painkillers, laxatives, cough and cold medicines, antacids, etc. Even though most of these medicines are now readily available over the counter, it is still prudent that you consult a doctor or pharmacist before taking any of these OTC medicines. Medicines are generally safe if used properly in the right dose, right way, right time and right amount.

However, those which should only be prescribed should never be bought over the counter or directly from a pharmacist, because not only is this contrary to the law, it may sometimes be dangerous. Most prescribed medicines need regular monitoring with the doctor who knows you best. The pharmacist cannot be the substitute for a physician because their individual training and expertise is quite different.

**2. Fomca in an interview had admonished a few private clinics that allowed the public to buy medicines over the counter without the need to see a doctor first. Is this practice actually allowed?**

In most cases, these should not be done. Medicines are only prescribed after the physician has an opportunity to interview and examine the patient to see if these medications are required. If there are untoward outcomes or bad side effects resulting from such a purchase of medicines over the counter, then it is difficult to justify and the doctor or nurse or dispenser may be at fault. However, in some cases, this is allowed provided the patient's record is available in that clinic for the doctor or nurses to refer to before selling the medicines to the patient concerned, only when these medications are repeat prescriptions of the same type. In most instances, this is not encouraged, and a doctor-patient encounter is preferred before any medications is prescribed or dispensed

3. What is the way for an individual to ensure the medicines that you are purchasing has been confirmed safe by the Ministry of Health Malaysia?

Most if not all medicines now regulated in Malaysia have special identification markers: a hologram, and a special registration number. Please refer to the diagram below.



**UNTUK MEMASTIKAN UBAT ITU TULEN, SEMUA UBAT MESTI ADA :**

- **NOMBOR PENDAFTARAN**  
8 digit nombor pendaftaran diikuti dengan abjad, contoh :  
**MAL 12345678X** Ubat OTC ditanda huruf 'X'  
**MAL 23456789A** Ubat terkawal ditanda huruf 'A'  
**MAL 34567891T** Ubat tradisional ditanda huruf 'T'



- **LABEL HOLOGRAM MEDITAG**  
Semua ubat mesti ada label hologram Meditag yang disahkan oleh KKM  
(Ketulenan hologram Meditag™ boleh disahkan melalui alat DEKODER HOLOGRAM MEDITAG™ yang terdapat di kedai farmasi)



Untuk pengesahan nombor pendaftaran, layari :  
**[www.bpfk.gov.my](http://www.bpfk.gov.my)**

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(Source : [www.knowyourmedicine.gov.my](http://www.knowyourmedicine.gov.my))

- 4. What is the right way to store medicine? This is because, some doctors have said that the way most people store medicines in the fridge is actually incorrect, in fact this way is said to be able to cause the life span of these medicines to be shorter because they are easily exposed to bacteria.**

It is important to store medicines properly. Keep them out of reach of children and store medicines from direct heat and light. Do not store medicines in the bathroom, near the kitchen sink or in other damp places. Heat or moisture can cause medicines to break down. Do not store medicines in the fridge unless you are directed to do so and do not leave your medicines in the car for a long period of time. Most medications do not need to be kept in the fridge because changes in temperature when taking the medicine in and out of the fridge can cause condensation and may help the pills deteriorate faster. Throw away all expired medicine and those that are no longer needed.

- 5. Generally, what is the appropriate life span for liquid and pill type of medications?**

Liquid medicines once opened usually have a short life span of effectiveness, usually not more than one month. In some cases, especially when eye drops or nose drops are concerned, these should be used within one to two weeks or as directed in the instructions. Old outdated medicines may be contaminated and cause adverse effects which can be serious.

Pill medicines are hardier. Most of these drugs when kept well can be used for as long as 2 to 3 years depending on the type and manufacturing details. The expiry date is usually given on the strip packing/blister pack or box or bottle. When used within the expiry date, medicines are then usually ensured of its efficacy and strength. Older expired drugs may have deteriorated and may not give consistent effects of the therapeutic results expected. Pills when dispensed in plastic envelopes usually should be consumed within a few weeks, as they are unprotected from moisture, heat and contact.

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