



National Prescribing Service Limited



Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### New medicine information resource for Arabic speakers

Australia's growing population of Arabic speakers now have access to a translated brochure explaining what they need to know about their medicines.

The Medimate brochure contains information about prescription medicines, over-the-counter medicines and natural and herbal medicines. It includes advice about how to use medicines safely, managing multiple medicines and keeping healthy with and without medicines.

This brochure was first published by the National Prescribing Service (NPS) in English in 2004 and, in partnership with the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA), has been translated into 7 other languages - Chinese, Greek, Italian, Vietnamese, Macedonian, Croatian and Arabic.

"Each year approximately 400,000 Australians experience problems related to using medicines. Australians from non-English speaking backgrounds are at higher risk of experiencing these problems," NPS CEO Dr Lynn Weekes said.

"It can be difficult for people with low English language proficiency to determine appropriate treatment plans with their health professionals due to language and literacy barriers as well as differing cultural beliefs about health and medicines."

"We are committed to ensuring that all Australians have access to the same high-quality information about using medicines safely, and will continue to develop information in languages other than English," Dr Weekes said.

The number of Arabic speakers in Australia has grown over the last decade. According to the 2006 Census, there were 243,672 people from an Arabic-speaking background living in Australia, constituting the fourth largest language group other than English.

With this in mind, NPS and FECCA conducted research into the medicines issues faced by Arabic speakers and found common problems with following medicine instructions. These included difficulties understanding what to take, when to take it, how often, and with or without food. The new Arabic Medimate brochure addresses the main issues found in this research and provides simple tips on how to prevent problems.

"Our Medimate brochure has been extremely popular – it provides practical, easy to understand advice, which can help prevent serious mishaps with medicines," Dr Weekes said.

The brochures are available from NPS at no cost. To order some for your general practice or pharmacy go to [www.nps.org.au/medimate](http://www.nps.org.au/medimate) or call 02 8217 8700.

To view a copy of the research report into the medicines issues for Arabic speakers in Australia, go to <http://www.fecca.org.au/MCQUM.cfm>

**ENDS**

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