



National Prescribing Service Limited

MEDIA RELEASE

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Mixing medicines, alcohol and sun can be a recipe for trouble

It's easy to forget about daily routines while on holidays but if you're one of the hundreds of thousands of Australians with a chronic health condition, forgetting to take your medicines or not taking them properly can have serious consequences.

Over the festive season Australians are urged to think about lifestyle factors that can reduce the effectiveness of medicines including drinking alcohol and spending time the sun.

"Holidays might mean a break from your daily routine but unfortunately our health doesn't get a break. Any medicines that you normally take on a regular basis should be continued along with lifestyle habits like eating a healthy diet and getting regular exercise," NPS CEO, Dr Lynn Weekes said.

"Alcohol can increase side effects of many medicines in particular antidepressants, sleeping tablets, some pain medicines and some antihistamines and some cough and cold medicines. It can also worsen some conditions that may be treated with medicines, such as depression and anxiety."

"Stop and think before consuming alcohol and read the consumer medicines information. If drowsiness will be increased by alcohol most prescription medicines will have a red sticker on the package."

A few medicines can increase sensitivity to the sun. These include the antibiotic doxycycline, some anti-epileptic medicines and immunotherapies, and most acne treatments.

"If you're using medicines that can increase sensitivity to the sun avoid spending large amounts of time outdoors. If you are outside ensure you wear sunscreen and protective clothing as your skin is likely to burn much faster than normal," Dr Weekes warned.

"Canapés, big lunches and dinners and alcohol are hard to avoid during the festive season but people with diabetes will need to watch what they eat. Be aware of what you're being served and how much you're eating, and plan your medicines and meal times," Dr Weekes said.

For more information about whether your medicines interact with alcohol or increase sun sensitivity download the consumer medicine information leaflet from www.nps.org.au/cmi or ask your doctor or pharmacist.

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