

Ten Reasons You Should Consider Blister Packing Your Medicines

As pharmacist, I get a lot of questions about blister packing. How do you know whether you should have your medicines blister packed? Here are ten benefits of blister packing your medications (plus four myths busted!):

1. Your medications are always up-to-date

Having your tablets in blister packs means you always receive the most up-to-date dose of each medication. Your pharmacist works closely with your doctor and any changes to your medicines are made immediately. All of your old, discontinued medications can be returned to the pharmacy for safe disposal. This makes it very easy to know exactly what you should be taking at any given time.

2. Taking your medications is simple and easy to get used to

Blister packs make it easy to take your medications. If you need to take several medicines at different times of the day, or if you have a busy schedule, poor eyesight and/or trouble opening bottles ... you will find blister packing very useful!

3. Blister packing is usually FREE

Patients taking multiple medications, who also suffer from a chronic illness qualify for free blister packing. But even if you don't qualify, you can ask one of our staff to see whether we can get it subsidised for you. Douglas Pharmaceuticals offer free trials several times a year.

4. Blister packs take up less space

Blister packs are about the same size as an A4 sheet of paper, which makes them very easy to store compared to the multiple bottles and packs.

5. Blister packs are great for travelling

We get a lot of requests to blister pack medications when people go away on holiday, especially when heading overseas. Blister packs are a great way to reduce the stress of taking multiple bottles of medication with you, especially as the change in daily routine can make it easy to miss doses.

6. *It's easy to see if you've missed a dose*

As every slot in the blister pack is dated accurately, it's very easy to see when you've missed a dose. This provides you with extra peace of mind that you're on track every day.

7. *Blister packs can include your over-the-counter vitamins and supplements*

Yes, it's true! Bring in your supplements and we will add them to your blister packs for you. Actually, we like to know which supplements you take, as it means we can recommend the best time of the day to take them (some medicines can interfere with supplements, and in this case should be taken 1-2 hours apart). It always pays to tell your pharmacist if you are self-medicating with over-the-counter items, as they may not be suitable, or you may be able to get them prescribed by your doctor and potentially save yourself some money.

8. *Less medication mistakes*

Blister packing takes all of the guesswork out of what to take when, which means less dosing mistakes. Tablet brands often change and medicines can look different. However, all of this is avoided with blister packing as your pharmacist makes all of the necessary updates.

9. *Easy to carry around*

Individual slots in the blister pack can be torn off. Whether it's for the whole day or for just one dose, it's very easy to pop an individual dose in your bag to take with you when you are out and about.

10. *Blister packs save time*

Your pharmacist organises your daily schedule, so you don't have to ... saving you time and stress!

Misconceptions about blister packing

1. *"Blister packs are just for forgetful, confused old people"*

I hear that a lot when suggesting blister packs to patients. People say to me "I'm not there yet, I can still remember things". But you don't need to be seriously forgetful and confused to start using blister packs! In fact, it is much better to start early, to make the transition as simple and easy as possible. There are many reasons why blister packs could work well for you ... if in doubt, just ask one of our pharmacists.

2. *“There’s no way back ... once I start using blister packs I’m stuck”*

It is true that once you try blister packing you will be less likely to go back, but only because it is so convenient! However, there is no reason why you can’t try it for a few months and, if for any reason you don’t like it, you can go back to receiving your medicines in bottles.

Sometimes patients come out of hospital with a complete change in their medications. Blister packing is often recommended in this setting, at least until a new medication routine is well established.

3. *“It takes a long time ... and I’m in a hurry!”*

Our blister packing machine is automated and takes almost the same amount of time as regular dispensing. So we can definitely do it while you wait.

4. *“People will judge me”*

There is absolutely no reason to think that other people will judge you for using blister packs. In fact, for some people blister packs can be the smart choice, as they help to keep your condition(s) well-managed.

In conclusion:

While blister packs can be very useful for the reasons listed above, I would like to emphasise that they are not the answer to all medication adherence issues. Every case must be evaluated in conjunction with your pharmacist, and a decision made in accordance with your lifestyle ... with the ultimate goal being a better health outcome.

If you are interested in learning more about blister packing, please talk to one of our friendly staff the next time you pop in to fill your prescription. We have an assessment tool that we can use to evaluate whether blister packing would be of value to you.

Stay tuned for new tips ... and remember, there is always a pharmacy door open for you when you need help!

Timea Venter

