

**EMBARGOED: 11am, Monday 7 September 2020**

**MULTICULTURAL HEALTH WEEK 2020  
HIGHLIGHTS SAFE USE OF MEDICINES FOR COMMUNITIES**

The safe use of medicines within multicultural communities is the main focus of Multicultural Health Week this year.

Research shows that people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds experience higher rates of adverse outcomes from poor medication management, including medication related hospital admissions.

Consultations with key stakeholders identified that people from multicultural communities often find information related to their medicines complex and overwhelming. There is also a lack of translated resources to help communities support the safe use of medicines. In some communities, there are also cultural practices around sharing medicines with others.

In her message at today's online launch, Secretary for Health Ms Elizabeth Koff stressed the relevance of the Multicultural Week 2020 theme 'Health Literacy and Safe Use of Medicines.

"This year has been a challenging one for all of us especially with the COVID-19 pandemic. We all need to work together to ensure our families, friends and loved ones are all safe. The theme is particularly important during this time. The week highlights the safe use of medicines and also the role your pharmacist has in supporting your health and safe use of medicines" Ms Koff said.

"This initiative showcases our work in delivering the initiatives highlighted in NSW Plan for Healthy Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities 2019-2023. The plan aims to ensure that people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities have equitable access to health care services that are culturally responsive, safe and high quality".

The Week also informs multicultural communities on the important role their pharmacist has in supporting their health and the safe use of medicine Key messages emphasise the importance of knowing:

- What your medicine is for
- How to take your medicine safely
- The active ingredient in your medicine
- That the packaging of medicines that are the same may look different

It is also important for people to understand how to manage their medicines during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Lisa Woodland, Director, NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service (MHCS) encouraged all communities and health professionals to access the multilingual resources developed for Multicultural Health Week. These resources communicate the key messages about the safe use of medicines and the role of pharmacists in supporting people's health.

“This year, we have worked in close collaboration with expert health professionals, consumer representatives from multicultural backgrounds, and valued health service partners in developing multilingual resources in close to 30 languages which highlight the how people can take their medicines safely”, said Ms. Woodland.

Resources for the week include a one-minute video which highlights the importance of talking with your pharmacist about your medicines available in 7 languages: Arabic, Cantonese, Mandarin, Greek, Italian, Vietnamese and English; a one-page factsheet about using medicines safely - available in 29 languages, social media posts and radio advertisements in multiple languages.

These resources are available to download for free from [www.multiculturalhealthweek.com](http://www.multiculturalhealthweek.com).

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