

## **Principles about writing and testing Consumer Medicine Information (CMI)**

A CMI can be written and designed so that at least 90% of consumers literate in English can:

- find the information that they are looking for about the medicine
- act upon that information appropriately.

To enable CMI writers to achieve this high standard, Guidelines\* that give complete instructions on how to write, layout and test CMIs with consumers have been developed through a grant from the Department of Health and Ageing.\*

These Guidelines were developed, and continue to be updated, through research and the accumulated data from the testing of many CMIs.

Over 1000 CMI, which draw on these Guidelines, are available to consumers in pharmacies in Australia, and pharmacists can print an up-to-date copy when they dispense medicines for consumers.

CMIs that follow the Guidelines are authoritative reference documents for consumers about their medicines. They are consistent with the approved Product Information and are non-promotional.

CMIs have a simple common structure of headings that guide readers to the information that interests them:

- what the medicine is for
- before you take it
- how to take it
- while you are taking it
- side effects
- after taking it

Under each heading there are instructions on what to do, and explanations where needed.

CMIs are tools in improving consumers' quality use of medicine. CMIs are intended to be used as an aid to counselling by health professionals, and can also be used by consumers on their own.

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\* Sless D & Shrensky R 2006 . Writing About Medicines For People: Usability Guidelines For Consumer Medicine Information. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Australian Self-Medication Industry through a Department of Health and Ageing grant.