



HeartKids



Medications and CoHD

If you are a young person with a heart condition, you might need to take meds every day to help your heart do its job properly. No matter what you're taking them for, it's super important to know what your meds are, why you're taking them, and what side effects to look out for.

Why do I need to take heart meds?

Some meds help your heart beat normally, some thin your blood to reduce the risk of forming blood clots and others keep your blood pressure in the right range for your body. Always follow the instructions from your healthcare team, your doctor, cardiology nurse, or pharmacist, and never stop taking your meds without checking in with them first!

As you grow and your body changes, you might notice your medication feels different for you. This is normal - your meds may need to be reviewed and adjusted. **If things feel different, let your healthcare team know!**

You need to know your meds, not just for yourself but in case there's an emergency. If someone asks what you take, you should be able to tell them!



Can't remember the names or doses? No worries — you can upload them to the **UpBeat App**, save a note in your phone, or carry a list in your wallet.



What if I get side effects?

All medications prescribed in Australia go through a thorough approval process to ensure they're safe for you to take, but side effects can still occur.

You know **your body** better than anyone. So, if something doesn't feel right after taking your meds, speak up! Let your doctor or cardiology nurse know if anything feels off.



They might order a few tests or switch your meds if needed. Sometimes the side effects are temporary and not a big deal, so they might just keep an eye on things.

And remember — it might not even be the meds! If your heart's doing something different, they'll check that out too.

What if I run out of meds?

Running out of meds = not ideal. Your heart and body need that support. Now that you're getting older and taking charge of your own health, **you can make the call** to your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist for a refill.

Don't wait until you've taken the last pill — call ahead and get it sorted early.

If you're on a blood thinner like **Warfarin** or **Coumadin**, running out is a big deal. If it happens, contact your pharmacist, doctor, or even head to the hospital emergency department straight away.

How do I pay for my medications if I need help?

We get it — medications can be expensive, and figuring out how to pay for them can be stressful. But you're not alone, and there is help available.

Here's what you need to know:

Medicare: If you're an Australian citizen or permanent resident, you're probably already covered by Medicare. This helps reduce the cost of many medications on the **Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS)** — that's a fancy name for a government list of meds that are cheaper for people with Medicare.

Health Care Card: If you or your family receive certain Centrelink payments, you might be able to get a Health Care Card. This can make your prescriptions even cheaper (sometimes just a few dollars).



Closing the Gap (CTG): If you're Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, you might be eligible for the **CTG PBS Co-payment** — this means even lower costs for meds. Ask your GP or pharmacist if you're registered.

Talk to your pharmacist: They're not just there to hand you medicine — they can explain costs and help find cheaper alternatives if your medication isn't fully covered.

Still stuck? Reach out to your hospital social worker, **HeartKids support team**, **HeartKids Helpline (1800 432 785)** or your GP. They can point you toward extra support options, like financial aid or community programs that help with medical costs.

Taking your medication can help you feel and function at your best, so you can do more of the things you enjoy each day.

Take charge of your health – and your meds!

Remembering to take meds every day isn't always easy. Here are a few tips to help:

- Take your pills at the same time each day — try setting a phone alarm
- Keep them somewhere you'll see them, like next to the bathroom sink
- Use a pill box or ask your pharmacist for a **Webster pack** (a special packaging system that organizes your medications by day and time)
- Keep track of when you'll need a refill or new prescription
- Check if you need a script before your next appointment