



**Joint Statement**  
**by**  
**The International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP)**  
**and**  
**The World Self Medication Industry (WSMI)**

**Responsible Self-Medication**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. Self-care, including self-medication, has been a feature of healthcare for many years.
2. Nowadays people are keen to accept more personal responsibility for their health status and to obtain as much sound information as possible from expert sources in order to help them make appropriate decisions in health care.
3. Governments and health insurers are increasingly encouraging self-care, including self-medication when appropriate, as one means of limiting the rate of increase in third party funding of health care.
4. Pharmacists are advisors to the public on everyday health care and key figures in the supply of medicines. Their education and training equips them to provide sound advice on medicines.
5. Pharmacists and the manufacturers of nonprescription medicines share the common goals of providing high quality service to the public and encouraging the responsible use of medicines. These are best achieved by adequate labelling and by ensuring that any necessary additional information or professional advice is given by a pharmacist or physician.
6. The companies represented by member associations of WSMI provide nonprescription medicines, the quality, safety and efficacy of which are guaranteed through the granting of marketing authorisations or other legally recognised procedures, operating through regulatory authorities in individual countries
7. Advertising is helpful in informing people about medicines that are available without prescription. It should always be responsible and should not discourage the individual from seeking advice from a pharmacist or physician.

## **DEFINITION**

Self-medication is the use of nonprescription medicines by people on their own initiative.

Pharmacists have a key role to play in providing them with assistance, advice and information about medicines available for self-medication.

## **THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PHARMACIST**

1. Pharmacists have a professional obligation to provide sound, objective advice about self-medication and the medicinal products available for self-medication.
2. Pharmacists have a professional obligation to report to the regulatory authorities, and to inform the manufacturer, of any adverse event encountered by an individual which may be associated with the use of a medicine purchased without a prescription.
3. Pharmacists have a professional obligation to recommend that medical advice should be sought where it is recognised that self-medication is not appropriate.
4. Pharmacists have a professional obligation to encourage members of the public to treat medicines as special products to be stored and used with care and, to that end, not to take any action which could encourage people to buy excessive quantities of a medicine.

## **THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MANUFACTURER OF NONPRESCRIPTION MEDICINES**

1. The manufacturer has a responsibility to provide medicines which are of a high standard of safety, quality and efficacy and meet all legal requirements for packaging and labelling and should work towards a world-wide standardised layout of information on labels.
2. The person responsible for the medicine, who will normally be the manufacturer but may also be the primary distributor, has a responsibility to provide all the information needed by pharmacists to enable them to provide appropriate advice to members of the public.
3. The manufacturer has a responsibility to ensure that claims made in advertising of a medicine can be substantiated scientifically, meet national regulations, industry guidelines and internal company controls and do not encourage inappropriate use.
4. The manufacturer has a responsibility to ensure that marketing methods encourage people to treat medicines with care and, to that end, not to take any action which could encourage people to buy excessive quantities of a medicine.

## **CONCLUSION**

The public interest will best be served when pharmacists and the nonprescription medicines industry work together to ensure that self-medication is responsible, is only undertaken when it is appropriate to do so and advice is always given to seek a consultation with a physician when that is necessary.

FIP and WSMI will work together to seek to ensure that pharmacists and manufacturers appropriately discharge their interacting responsibilities.