container for a medicinal product is to maintain the quality, safety and stability of its contents.

Although different pharmaceutical preparations will be packaged in different containers depending on the product type, pharmaceutical packaging can largely be grouped into a few main types.

KeyPoints

The ideal container should be:

1. Robust enough to protect the contents against crushing during handling and transport
2. Convenient to use in order to promote good patient compliance (i.e. encourage patients to take their medication at the correct times)
3. Easy to open and close, especially if the medication is for an elderly or arthritic patient
4. Constructed of materials which do not react with the medicine, so the materials of construction should be inert
5. Sufficiently transparent to allow for inspection of the contents in the case of liquid preparations.

Tablet bottles

Tablet bottles come in a variety of shapes and sizes and are usually made of either glass or plastic (Figure 1.1). Generally, tablet bottles are coloured amber to reduce the likelihood of the contents reacting with light. They are used for solid, single-dose preparations that are intended for oral use (i.e. tablets and capsules).

In normal circumstances, all tablet bottles would be fitted with child-resistant closures. Although not child-proof, these closures reduce the possibility of access to medication by children. There are a number of different types of child-resistant closures on the market. Consideration should be given to the patient when using child-resistant closures, as some patient groups (e.g. the elderly and arthritic patients) may not be able to open the container to access their medication. This can lead to non-compliance or reduced compliance.

Figure 1.1
A selection of tablet bottles.