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## Booklet saves valuable time

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When an ambulance is called to your home and the paramedics rush in, have you thought the same as me – they grab the patient and rush off to hospital, sirens sounding, lights flashing?

Well, it doesn't always happen like that.

For a start, the sirens and lights are mostly used on the way to a patient, not that often on the way to hospital with the patient. And rushing is not part of a paramedic's tool kit.

Paramedics calmly assess a patient and get as much detail as possible about their condition and medications before making decisions on how to stabilise them and what treatment should be started.

South Australian paramedic Graeme Aistrope said when paramedics were called, a typical scenario was that distraught family members may be unable to give correct details of the patient's condition or their medication.

The paramedics physically have to collect all the patient's medication they can find in the house, obtain a medical history, and take it to the hospital with the patient.

That can take some time, but it is necessary to ensure nothing is done that upsets a person's known medical conditions.

Graeme said South Australian paramedics came up with a better idea – an emergency medical information book that hangs on the fridge.



### COMMUNITY PROJECT

SA paramedic Graeme Aistrope and Rotarian Arthur Jeffries with the potentially life-saving medical book that sticks on your fridge.

Photo by:

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It contains all the medical information paramedics or doctors at the hospital are likely to need, and is left in a place easily found in any home.

Graeme approached some South Australian Rotarians in 1999 to see if they would consider financing a three-month trial of the book.

They did more than that – they flooded every retirement village in the area and had an outstanding response.

Now every ambulance service in Australia has endorsed the book and wants it in every home.

Rotary has printed more than half a million of the books and continues to finance this community project.

Graeme said the book should be filled out with the help of the patient's doctor. Then it lives on the fridge. "The only place we look for it is on the fridge and the only person who takes it off the fridge is a paramedic," he said.

Ring your local Rotary club for details about how to get your copy or log onto [www.emib.org.au](http://www.emib.org.au) to send an e-mail asking for details.



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