

SAFE AGING MEDICATION TIPS



1. Keep an up to date, written list of any medication or over the counter product you use daily or even occasionally.

- ✓ All prescription drugs
- ✓ All over the counter medications
- ✓ All dietary supplements, including vitamins and herbals

2. Talk with Your Doctor, Pharmacist, or Other Health Care Professionals

- ✓ Discuss allergies or sensitivities you may have.
- ✓ Tell about anything that could affect your ability to take medicines, such as difficulty swallowing, cost, inconvenient time schedules, side effects or odd things happening to you since starting medication
- ✓ Ask questions about any concerns or fears you may have
- ✓ Show your medication list to **all** of your health professionals

3. Use one pharmacist to fill all of your medications.

- ✓ Use the same pharmacy for all of your medicine needs, whenever possible.
- ✓ Ask for an annual review of your combined medications and over the counter drugs.
- ✓ Ask if there are less expensive generic brands.
- ✓ Ask questions about foods or liquids that might have a negative affect on you or the medication.
- ✓ Always ask for written information to take with you.
- ✓ Never take expired medication.
- ✓ Never take anyone else's medication

4. Learn About Your Prescription and Over the Counter Drugs

- ✓ the brand and generic names.
- ✓ how to properly store medications such as in cold temperature, dark place, etc.
- ✓ how and under what conditions you should stop using them.
- ✓ when, how, and how long to use them.
- ✓ what to do if you miss a dose.
- ✓ what each pill looks like.
- ✓ what medications are supposed to do.
- ✓ what are possible side effects.
- ✓ what type of things could have when interacting with other foods or drinks.
- ✓ whether you need any medical tests or monitoring while taking medications.
- ✓ when to expect results.

5. Always Read the Label and Follow Directions exactly as told

- ✓ read and follow the **exact** directions on the label and from the doctor, pharmacist, or other health care professional.
- ✓ make sure you understand the directions; ask if you have questions or concerns.
- ✓ always double check that you have the right medicine.
- ✓ keep medicines in their original labeled containers, whenever possible.
- ✓ never combine different medicines in the same bottle.
- ✓ consult with your health care professional if you are thinking about stopping the medicine before the prescribed time, or if you plan to use the medicine differently than directed

6. Pay attention to Possible Side Effects

Ask if there is anything you can do to minimize possible side effects, such as eating before you take a medicine to reduce stomach upset.

- ✓ Before starting any new medicine or dietary supplement (including vitamins or herbal supplements), ask if there are possible interactions with what you are currently using.
- ✓ Pay attention to how you are feeling; note any changes. Write down the changes so that you can remember to tell your doctor, pharmacist, or other health care professional.
- ✓ Know what to do if you experience side effects and when to notify your doctor.
- ✓ Know when you should notice an improvement and when to report back.

7. Avoid Interactions

- ✓ Ask if there are foods, drinks, alcohol, or over the counter products that should be avoided.
- ✓ Ask if sunshine should be avoided
- ✓ Ask the amount of time interactions could occur

<http://www.fda.gov/cder/consumerinfo/think.htm>