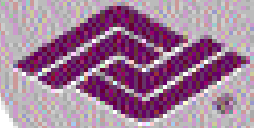


USE MEDICINES SAFELY

Do's of using medications:

- Know the name of the medication and why you are taking it. If you take multiple medications, make a list of all the medicines you are taking and carry it with you. You can then refer to it at doctor's appointments, at your pharmacy, or in an emergency situation.
- Know the common side effects of the medication you are taking and what to do if you experience a bad reaction.
- Understand how and when to take your medications (how many times a day and at what times, with or without food). Know if there are any special instructions (for example, shaking a liquid medication before using).
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist what to do if you miss a dose of your medication. Should you take the dose when you remember it or should you wait until the next dose is due?
- Ask if there are any special storage conditions for your medication (for example, keep in refrigerator). Most medications without special storage instructions should be stored in a cool, dry place. **And always keep all medicines out of the reach of children.**
- Take the medication according to the directions prescribed by your doctor.
- Take the complete course of medication prescribed. Even though some medications may make you feel better after a few days, it is important to take all medications prescribed to prevent a relapse.
- Call your doctor right away if you have any unexpected or very unpleasant problems with your medicines.
- Consider getting all your medications from one pharmacy. This allows the pharmacist to monitor possible interactions between medications.
- Discuss any questions or problems about your medication with your doctor or pharmacist. Make sure you understand their answers and that their response completely satisfies your questions and concerns. You have a right as a patient to a complete and thorough understanding of your condition and medications.
- If you have a chronic or life threatening condition, be sure to wear a medical ID bracelet.
- Keep important names and numbers in your wallet, including your doctors, pharmacists, emergency contacts and health insurance information.



USE MEDICINES SAFELY

Don'ts of using medications:

- Don't share medications with family members or friends. Although their medical problems may seem similar to yours, prescription medications should only be prescribed by a doctor who is familiar with the patient's complete medical history and allergies.
- Don't mix medications in pill bottles. Store medications in properly labeled original containers that you receive from the pharmacy. Some medications may lose their effectiveness if improperly stored. Mixing medications may greatly increase your chance of taking the wrong medication.
- Don't keep medications that you are no longer taking. Safely dispose of them by returning them to your pharmacist. Do not wash medications down the sink or flush in the toilet. Drugs are chemicals and can place additional strain on a water purification system.
- Don't mix medicine and alcohol without first talking to your doctor. Drinking alcohol when you are taking some medications can be very dangerous.

Tips for Traveling with Medication:

- Keep medications in carry-on bags, not checked luggage, which can be delayed or lost.
- Keep drugs in their original containers. If you take multiple pills and use a dispenser, wait until you arrive to fill it. That way, you will have information with you (medicine name, instructions, warnings), just in case.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist if specific medicines increase sensitivity to sun and heat.
- Don't store drugs in a car's glove compartment or trunk (or in a beach bag); temperatures can easily hit over 100 degrees, altering the drug's potency.

Resources:

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Consumer Affairs Office has more information about safe use of medicines. Call 1-888-INFO-FDA (1-888-463-6332).

If you have questions or concerns regarding your condition, medication or drug interactions, call Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1-800-311-3435.