

Tips for Taking Your Medicine Safely

It is very important to take your medicine the right way – just as your doctor tells you.

When you come into the hospital, you will be asked about your medicines. You should always carry a list of your medicines and allergies with you that includes

- The name of the medicine
- The dose ordered
- How often you are taking the medicine
- Why you are taking the medicine

When you go home from the hospital, someone will talk with you about which medicines to take and which medicines to stop taking. When you return to your doctor, take your new list with you. Keep your Health Information card in your wallet or purse.

What do I need to know about taking my medicine?

When you go to the hospital

- Bring your updated medicine card or list with you to the hospital. If you do not have one, bring all your medicines in the current medicine bottle or packages from your pharmacy. You need to include any over the counter medicines, vitamins, and herbals you take. Your own medicines will be sent home with a family member after a list is made.
- Before you go home, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist to tell you about the medicines you will take at home. Ask for information about each new medicine.
- Medicine information or lists that are given to you at discharge should be shared with your doctor the next time you are seen in your doctor's office or clinic.

When you go home

- Take only the medicines given to you by your doctor or pharmacist.
 - Do not take other people's medicine.
- Before you take your medicine, read the label. If you have any questions, call your doctor or pharmacist.
- Never take your medicine in the dark. Turn on a light.
- Do not stop taking your medicine just because you start to feel better. Only stop taking your medicine when your doctor tells you to stop taking it.

- Do not take medicine out of one bottle and put in another one. Do not store different medicines in the same bottle.
- Do not keep your medicines in the car, by the stove, or in the bathroom. Heat and dampness can affect how medicines work.
- Check the expiration date on all your medicines. Destroy any medicine if it is outdated.
- Ask your pharmacist the best way to get rid of your outdated medicines or medicines that have been stopped.
- Read the patient instruction packet given to you by your pharmacist about your medicines.

When you are at the drugstore

- Take your new medicine prescriptions and refills to the same drugstore. Your pharmacist then has a list of all your medicines.
- If you use more than one drugstore, make sure each one has a list of all your medicines.

Remember

You always need to keep a list of your medicines and allergies with you. A close family member may also need to have the list.

- Keep it up to date. Write down all changes made to your medicines on your list. If you stop taking a medicine, draw a line through it and note the date it was stopped. If you need help, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist to help you keep it up-to-date.

You should never be afraid to ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about your medicines. Your health is too important. Speak up!

For additional health information
contact the Health Information Center at (918) 494-1080