



Be safe with your medications

Millions of Americans are prescribed medication each year. Unfortunately, only about half take their medications according to the directions they are given by their health care provider.

Tips on what to do and not to do with your medications:

DO:

- Know the names of your medications and why you are taking them.
- Take and finish your medications as prescribed by your health care provider.
- Know how and when to take your medications. If there are any special instructions for taking the medication, be sure you understand them.
- Make a list of all of your current medications including any over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, minerals, herbal or dietary supplements. Carry this list with you.
- Talk with your health care provider if you miss or forget a dose.

DO NOT:

- Do not stop taking your medication unless you talk with your health care provider first. Stopping your medication too early could cause unwanted side effects.
- Do not take a double dose of medication. Most of the time, more is *not* better.
- Do not take expired medications or medications you no longer need. Safely get rid of them by returning them to your pharmacist.
- Do not drink alcohol when taking your medication without first talking with your health care provider. Drinking alcohol when taking medications can make you very sick.
- Do not share your medications with family or friends.

Tips for remembering to take your medications

- Make taking your medications part of your daily routine and take them as directed by your health care provider.
- Keep medications where you will notice them. If your medication needs to be taken with food, put them on the table or wherever you eat on a regular basis.
- Use a pill box that allows you to organize your medications in two ways: by each day (Monday – Sunday) and by times of day (morning, noon or night).
- Set an alarm clock, timer, or cell phone to beep when it is time to take your medications.

Call your health care provider or pharmacist if you have any questions about taking your medications. Keep all medications out of the reach of children.

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