

Medicine Best Practices

Whether you're at the doctor's office, pharmacy or home, there are important things you can do to help ensure you're taking your medicines correctly.



1 Prepare for your appointment with the doctor.

At your doctor's office, give information and ask questions about your medicines.

Tell your doctor and nurse if you're pregnant or breastfeeding or plan to become pregnant so they can make sure you can take certain medicines.

Bring your medicine bottles or a written list of the medicines you take (including prescription drugs, over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal remedies or supplements) and any known drug allergies you have.

Be ready with questions about your medicines, especially for medicines that are new to you.

ASK QUESTIONS LIKE:

- What is the name of this medicine?
- What is this medicine for?
- When and how do I take it?
- Can I take it with other medicines?
- Should I take it with or without food?
- Are there any foods I should not eat when I take it?
- How long do I need to take this medicine?
- Are there any side effects I should watch for?
- What should I do if I have or think I'm having a side effect?



2 At the pharmacy, get clear instructions on how to take your medicine.

Your pharmacist is an expert in medicines and an important resource to learn more about your medicines.

TIPS TO CONSIDER:

When the pharmacist gives the medicine to you, remove it from the paper pharmacy bag and read the pharmacy label.

Check the medicine name to make sure it matches your prescription.

If you don't understand how to take your medicine (dose, time of day, with/without food, etc.), ask the pharmacist to explain it to you. They will be happy to explain.

ASK QUESTIONS LIKE:

How should I store this medicine? For example, does it need to be kept in the refrigerator?

Can I get this label printed in a different language?

TIPS TO CONSIDER:

Keep your medicines in one place so you know where they are.

Remember not to leave medicines in your car because temperatures can vary.

Use a paper calendar or the calendar on your mobile phone or another digital device to schedule reminders for taking your medicines on time.

Ask friends and family members for help with your medicines if you need it.

3 Establish a routine when you're at home and when you travel.

Take your medicines exactly the way your health care provider told you to.

Plan ahead if you're going to travel:

Make sure you have enough medicine for your whole trip (take extra in case you need to stay longer).

If you are flying, pack your medicines in your carry-on luggage in their original containers so there's no problem going through the security check.

