

Taking Your Drugs Safely

You've gone to the doctor and the pharmacy, and spent money on your drugs. Don't minimize their effectiveness by taking them incorrectly. Here are some guidelines to help you.

- **Buy your medications at one pharmacy**, if possible, so they have a record of all the drugs you are taking (to protect against interactions).
- **Use a pill sorter.**
- **Make a chart and check off medications** after taking them.
- **Follow instructions carefully.** Take your medications at the correct times of day and before or after meals.
- **Have someone help you** if it's confusing.
- **Avoid foods your doctor or pharmacist told you would interact** with the drug.
- **If you experience adverse side effects, call your doctor right away.**
- **If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you can**, unless it is almost time for your next dose.
- **Don't stop taking the medication** without consulting your doctor.
- **Use the entire prescription** (especially antibiotics). Don't stop taking the medicine as soon as you feel better.
- **Never take anyone else's medication.**
- **Throw out expired prescriptions.**
- **Store your medications in a cool, dry place.** The medicine cabinet in a warm, steamy bathroom is not the best choice. A better alternative is a kitchen cupboard away from stove or sink.
- **If you are traveling by air, take your drugs in your carry-on bag** in case your checked luggage gets lost.
- **Refill your prescription before the current one is used up**, especially if there is a winter storm warning or other event that will prevent you from leaving your house for a while.



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