



Managing Your Medicines

When you're taking several medications each day it can be hard to keep track of them. But taking your medication regularly will help you feel better and stay healthy. Here are some tips to help you manage your medication:

- Always know the basics about your medications, such as what they're for and when to take them.
- It's important to take your medicines as recommended.
- Tell your health care providers which medicines (prescription and nonprescription) and dietary supplements (such as vitamins) you use.

KNOWING THE BASICS

Questions to ask your doctors about your medicines:

- What are the names of my medicines (brand and generic)?
- What the strength? (for example, the milligrams, abbreviated as mg)
- What's this medicine for?
- How long will it take this medicine to work?
- How much should I take for one dose?
- When should I take it? How many times a day? At what times?
- Should I take it on an empty stomach?
- Should I avoid any foods or medicines when I take it?
- Should I avoid alcoholic beverages when I'm taking this medicine?
- How does this medicine affect my blood glucose (sugar) level?
- Do I need to avoid driving when I take this medicine?
- What side effects might happen with this medicine?
- What should I do if I experience side effects?
- What should I do if I miss a dose?
- How should this medicine be stored?
- How long will this supply last? What about refills?

TAKE YOUR MEDICINES AS RECOMMENDED

When you don't take a medicine as prescribed, the effect on your health can be unpredictable — or even dangerous. If you're not taking your medicine, think about the reasons. Are there unpleasant side effects? Is the medicine too expensive? Is it hard to remember to take it? Tell your health care providers. They may be able to help.

TIPS TO HELP YOU TO REMEMBER TO TAKE YOUR MEDICINES

- Try using a pill organizer with a compartment for each day of the week.
- Link your pill-taking to something in your daily routine. For example, take your morning medicine right after you brush your teeth.
- Use a chart to check off when you've taken your medicines.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO TELL YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS ABOUT ALL MEDICATIONS YOU ARE TAKING?

Some combinations of prescription medicines, nonprescription medicines and dietary supplements can be harmful. This is why it's so important that your health care providers be aware of all of the medicines you take, including nonprescription medicines (such as aspirin and laxatives) and dietary supplements (vitamins, minerals, herbal and other substances).

Using a medicine chart can help you easily discuss your current medications with your provider. Always take a copy with you when you see each of your health care providers and consider giving a copy to a close relative.