



## Safe Medication Management

It is very important to take your medications safely, and to know what to do if something goes wrong. Be sure you know what medication you are taking and why. Ask how the medicine will help you. If you have questions about your medications and when to take them, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

Here are some tips to help you safely take your medications.

### Always Take Your Medications Exactly as Your Doctor Told You

- Be sure to take your medications at the right time, in the right amount, and the right way.
  - For example, some medication should be taken after you have eaten something because it can hurt your stomach. Other medication should be taken before you have eaten anything.
- Use reminders or alarms to help you remember when to take your medications.
  - For example, for medication you take each morning or before bed, leave a reminder near your toothbrush.
- Make a list of all your medications and vitamins, how much of each you are supposed to take, and when are you to take each one.
  - Bring a copy of the list with you any time you will be away from home. You can keep the list in your wallet or on your cell phone.
- Know how your medications might make you feel if they aren't working right or if you are having a bad reaction to one, like a rash or feeling dizzy or drowsy.
- Talk to your doctor before you stop taking any of your medication.



Source: DDS Clinical Services

### Special Situations



- Ask if there are certain foods or drinks (including alcohol) you should avoid while taking your medications.
- Ask if you need to stay out of the sun with any of your medications. Some medications make it easier to get a bad sunburn.
- Talk with your doctor about if you should wear a medical alert tag because of the medication you are taking.

### What to Do if You Miss a Dose of Your Medication

- Tell someone, like a staff person or family member, so that they can help decide what to do next.
- Call the pharmacist or doctor so they can help you decide when to take the next dose.
- If you don't feel good or you feel different than normal, tell a staff person or family member.
- **Call 911 in an emergency.**



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## Know How and Where to Store Your Medications

- Ask your pharmacist about where you should keep your medicines. Some may need to be kept in the refrigerator.
- Keep medications in a cool, dry place (not in direct sunshine).
- Keep medication separate from medicine belonging to other people.
- Keep medication separate from household items like cleaning products.
- Keep medicine in its original container or bottle, or in a daily pill box.
- Don't take medication that looks damaged, or has gotten dirty or fallen apart.



## Make Sure You Have Enough Medication

- Make sure you have enough medicine to last until your next refill.
- Sometimes, you may need to see your doctor before getting a refill.
- If a medication costs too much, talk to your doctor or pharmacist about different medications or treatments that cost less.
- There may be less expensive ways to pay for it (like discount programs and coupons).
- Keep extra medication in your [emergency preparedness kit](#).



## Don't Keep Old or Expired Medications

- Check the expiration date on medicine labels to if the medicine has expired and no longer is safe to take.
- Ask your pharmacy what to do with old or expired medicines.
  - Never put medicine in the toilet or garbage.

## Take Only Your Medications

- Only take medicine that was prescribed for you.
- Never give your prescription medicine to anyone else.
- Do not take prescription medicine that is not yours.

## Ask for Help

Talk with your pharmacist, your health care provider, doctor or support staff if:

- If you think you are having a bad reaction to your medication.
- If you need help taking your medicine. This includes if you keep forgetting to take it when you are supposed to.

**Call 911 in an emergency**, or if you are not hearing back from the people you already called.



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