

## Know the Medicines You're Taking



Knowing certain details about your medicines helps you take them correctly and safely. For each medicine, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist the questions below. Write down the answers so you don't forget. Then fill in the information on your medicine list. Also, ask about anything you don't understand or that seems wrong. For instance, if you get a refill and the pills don't look like the ones from last time, talk to the pharmacist before taking them. It's recommended that you contact your prescribing healthcare provider before stopping a medicine. Be sure your healthcare provider know all the medicines you are taking. Also, try to use just one pharmacy (or pharmacy chain) for the same reason.

### Questions to ask

- What is the medicine's name? Find out the brand name as well as the generic name, if any.
- Why am I taking this? What does it do? How fast will it work?
- How often should I take this? At what time of day? Is it important to take it at the same time each day?
- How much of the medicine (what dosage) should I take? How many pills is that?
- What should I do if I miss a dose? What are some of the symptoms that may occur if I miss a dose?
- Should I expect any side effects from this medicine? What should I do if I have them?
- Do I follow any special instructions while taking this? Are there any activities, foods, or other medicines I should avoid while taking this? Do I need to take the medicine with food, or before I eat? Do I need to sit up or avoid lying down after taking the medicine?
- How long should I keep taking this? When I run out, should I order more?
- How often should I come in to have this medicine monitored?

### Beware of medicine interactions

Vitamins, herbal supplements, and some over-the-counter medicines can be dangerous to take if you use heart medicines. So tell your healthcare provider about all products you're taking. This includes even simple remedies for headaches, allergies, colds, or constipation. Show your medicine list to the pharmacist every time you buy prescription or over-the-counter medicine. They can tell you which medicines to avoid. Also, drinking alcohol while taking medicine can be dangerous.

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