

In an effort to assist you with any medication questions or concerns we have compiled this medication guide that answers many of the common questions or concerns.

Knowing and Understanding the Rationale for Each Medication

It is important for you to understand the purpose for each medication, the symptoms it is meant to address and reasons for which it is prescribed.

How the Medication Works

For some people, it takes several weeks to feel the effects of certain medications because a certain level needs to build up in your system over time. If you stop taking these medications within the first few weeks, you will not know how they will affect you. Sometimes it takes several trials of different medications to find the one that works for you. Not every medication works the same for every person.

Intended Benefits, as Related to the Behavior or Symptom Targeted by the Medication

Your improvement may be gradual. The first pill may not give you the results you want. Please remain mindful that not all medications make symptoms disappear immediately and completely.



Self-Administration Instructions

Make sure you understand how and when to take each of your medications and follow those instructions. Know the time of day to take your pills, whether you should take them with/without food, and how many times a day you should take each pill. Use of a med box might be helpful if you have a hard time remembering if you took your pills. If you vomit after taking meds, don't assume that you must take another pill. Check with a pharmacist or doctor before taking an additional dose.

Taking Medications as Prescribed is Important

- ★ Not taking every dose when it is supposed to be taken can decrease its effectiveness.
- ★ Pick a regular time and stick to it as close as possible.
- ★ Adhere to your dosing instructions.
- ★ Don't add doses.
- ★ Don't skip doses.
- ★ Please follow your doctor's instructions if you happen to miss a dose.
- ★ Make-up dosing is different for all meds.
- ★ A sudden change in symptoms and/or effectiveness may indicate a lack of compliance.
- ★ Don't cut pills that are meant to be taken whole.
- ★ Do not restart a medication that you haven't taken for a while without speaking to your doctor.
- ★ It is important that you do not let your prescription run out. Be sure to pay attention to how many are left and secure an appointment prior to taking your last pill.
- ★ PRNs (or as necessary medications) should be taken as prescribed by the doctor.

Need for Laboratory Monitoring

If a lab test is ordered, it is for your safety. Be sure to follow through in order to monitor the effectiveness of the medications. Some medications cannot be refilled by a doctor without the lab results. If bloodwork has been ordered, be sure to check whether you are required to fast prior to the blood test.



Side Effects

Side effects often appear fairly quickly after starting a new medication. Inform your doctor if they don't go away. He/She may be able to help by adding another medication, changing the dose, or changing to a different medication.

Risks Associated with Each Medicine

Certain medications can be addictive for some people so it is important to closely follow your doctor's orders. Some medications cannot be stopped immediately without your doctor developing a plan to decrease them. It can be dangerous to discontinue some medications on your own.

Contraindications

It is important to tell your doctor about all of the medications you are taking. This includes any medical, psychiatric and over-the-counter medications. Not everything is safe to take together and some pills will make others not work as well. Before buying any over-the-counter medication, talk to the pharmacist about possible interactions. Some medications have dietary restrictions, so always read the information included with your prescription when you pick it up or ask the pharmacist.

Potential Drug Reactions when Combining Prescription & Nonprescription Medications

Alcohol, tobacco, caffeine, illegal drugs and supplements can quickly interfere with the effectiveness of your medications. Some of these are very dangerous in combination with your meds. Make sure your doctor is aware of all substances you are ingesting. Even nicotine can negatively impact the effectiveness of your medications.

Potential Implications Between Medications, Diet & Exercise

Some medications may cause weight gain, so it is important to closely monitor your diet and participate in an exercise regimen. Some medications may cause

morning drowsiness, so it is important to get up and move. Ask your doctor about the importance of diet and exercise related to your particular medication.

Early Signs of Relapse Related to Medication Effectiveness

It is important for your doctor to see you when providing a refill, so that he/she can assess any issues of which you may not be aware. If you feel your symptoms are returning or increasing, contact your doctor right away. The sooner you notify your doctor, the sooner he/she can help.

Risks Associated with Pregnancy

Immediately inform your doctor if you plan to or have become pregnant or are breast feeding, as some medications can significantly impact the baby.

Wellness Management & Recovery Planning

It is important to attend all of your appointments. Continue with preventative care, prescription refills, medication administration, etc. Even when you are feeling well, maintain healthy eating and exercise and keep taking your medications to prevent relapse. Your doctor may decrease the frequency of your appointments when you remain stable. Symptoms are rarely 'cured,' but can be managed with the assistance of treatment and medications. Utilize recovery tools in combination with medications. Recovery tools include personal medicine, wellness recovery action plans, relapse prevention plans, peer support services, and psychiatric advance directives.

Financial Supports & Resources

If you can't afford your medication, consult with your doctor right away. Do not stop taking your medication as you may experience unwanted symptoms. If you are unable to afford your medications, we may be able to help by providing samples, referral to a patient assistant program and/or partial prescriptions refills.

Safety Precautions

Please use the medication take backs offered in your community to discard of any unused medications safely.

Always be sure to contact your doctor or your pharmacist with any questions or concerns regarding your medications.

