

Taking Medicines Safely

Medicines are often part of treatment for illness or injury. Taking medicine is not without some risk for side effects. Follow these tips for taking medicines safely:

- Keep a list of your medicines with you. Include prescription and over the counter medicines, herbs, vitamins and any home remedies you use.
- Show this list to all doctors, pharmacists and dentists who are treating you.
- Take your medicine as ordered by your doctor. Do not change or stop taking any medicine until you talk to your doctor.
- Take your medicines at the same time each day.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, breastfeeding or on a special diet.
- Get a refill at least one week before your medicine is gone.
- Throw away unused or expired medicines.
- Do not take any new herbal products or over the counter medicines without first checking with your doctor or pharmacist. These products may change the way your other medicines work.
- Do not give your medicines to anyone else.

New Medicine

- Check if the medicine is covered by your insurance or if a generic medicine can be used.
- Use only one pharmacy so that there is a record of all of your medicines.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist these questions:
 - ▶ How do I take this medicine?

- ▶ How long do I take this medicine? Do I take it until I am better? Is this a medicine I need to take always to keep my problem under control?
- ▶ What are the side effects and what do I do if they occur?
- ▶ What do I do when I forget to take my medicine?
- ▶ What do I do if I take too much medicine?
- ▶ Can I take this medicine with the other medicines I am taking?

Storing Medicine

- Keep all medicines in their containers unless you are using a pillbox.
- Store medicines in a cool, dry place.
- Keep bottles tightly capped and out of the reach of children.

Write down this information:

- What is the name of the medicine?
- Why do I take it?
- How much do I take?
- What times should I take it?

Use the form on the next page to write your medicines down and carry it in your wallet so you have it when you need it.

Talk to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if you have:

- Any questions about your medicines or how to take them
- Any side effects
- Other concerns

Medicine List

Name of Medicine	Reason I take it	How much I take	Times I take it

My allergies: _____

Key phone numbers:

Pharmacy _____

Doctor _____

Poison Control 1-800-222-1222