



Quick Tips: Taking Medicines Wisely

Get started

Medicines can help you manage your health, but only if you take them correctly. If you're having problems taking your medicine as prescribed, try thinking about why you're having trouble. You might not be sure why your medicine is important or if it is working. Maybe you just can't remember to take your medicine every day. Or perhaps you're having a hard time paying for medicines or dealing with side effects. If so, these tips might help.

Remembering your medicines

- Plan a daily schedule of your medicines and how and when to take them. Put your schedule where you can see it. Take it with you when you travel.
- Get a pillbox that holds a week's worth of pills. Be sure to leave at least one pill in the original bottle. That way, if you forget what a pill is for, you can find it in the bottle it came from.
- Post notes near clocks or on the bathroom mirror to remind you to take your medicines.
- Take your medicine when you do another daily task, such as brushing your teeth or making morning coffee. This will help make taking medicine into a routine.
- Set your watch, phone, kitchen timer, or computer calendar to remind you when to take your medicine.
- Figure out how long your bottle of medicine will last. Put refill reminders on your calendar so you won't run out of medicine. Check if your pharmacy offers to send text or email reminders when it's time to refill your prescriptions.

- If you get interrupted before you can take your medicine, keep the bottle in your hand. This will help you remember to take it later.

Paying for medicines

- It's **not** a good idea to try to save money by taking only half a dose or by taking your medicines less often. If you don't take the right amount of medicine at the right time, it won't work the way it should.
- Is there a lower-cost medicine you can take? Ask your doctor. Maybe you can take a generic medicine. Or there may be another way that you could save money, such as buying medicines in bulk or through a mail-order service.
- Check with pharmacies in your area to compare prices for the medicines you need.
- Some drug companies have programs that help people who can't afford medicine. Your state may also have a program that provides drugs at a lower cost. Ask your doctor for help finding one of these programs. You can find out more information at www.pparx.org.

When to call your doctor

If you're having a problem with your medicine, don't just stop taking it. Keep in mind that your medicines can help you avoid complications that could happen because of your health problem. Talk to your doctor first if:

- **You're having a problem with side effects.** You may be able to take a different medicine. Or your doctor may have ideas about how to reduce side effects. If an upset stomach is the problem, for example, ask if you can take the medicine with food.

- **You feel that your medicine isn't working.** Keep in mind that some medicines take time to work.
- **Your medicine is too hard to use.** Ask your doctor about ways to make taking it easier. For example, if you use an inhaler,

ask your doctor to show you how to use it. If you need to give yourself shots, ask your doctor for tips on how to make it easier.



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