



## ...A Dozen Questions to Help you Understand Your Medicines

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Print this page and take it with you on your next visit to your doctor or pharmacist.

1. What are the brand and generic names of the medicines?
2. What is the medicine supposed to do?
3. How should I use the medicine?
  - by mouth
  - in the eye or ear?
  - on the skin?
  - by injection?
  - other?
  - how much?
  - how often and what time? (e.g., morning, at bedtime)
  - for how long?
  - with meals or without food?
4. What should I do if I miss a dose?
5. When will the medicine begin to work?
6. How will I know if the medicine is working and what should I do if it doesn't seem to work?
7. What tests, if any, will be needed once I start taking this medicine? When will my first test be?

8. What side effects should I watch for?
  - How long will they last?
  - What should I do if they occur?
  - How can I lessen the side effects?
9. While using this medicine, should I avoid:
  - driving, operating machines, lawn mowers, etc?
  - drinking alcohol?
  - eating certain foods?
  - taking certain medicines (prescription, over-the-counter, and/or dietary supplements)?
  - Are there any other precautions?
10. How should I store the medicine?
  - at room temperature?
  - in the refrigerator?
  - away from heat, sunlight, or humidity?
  - can the medicine be put in another container?
11. Can I get a refill? When?
12. Are there special instructions about how to use the medicine?

### General Information About Using Medicines

#### ...BEFORE YOU USE ANY NEW MEDICINE

Before you use any new medicine, you should tell your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse if you:

- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant
- are breast-feeding
- have any allergies
- are taking any other medicines, including over-the-counter medicines such as aspirin, cold medicines, if you are taking any vitamins, minerals, nutritional supplements, herbals, or alternative drugs
- have any other medical problem.

Take your medicines exactly as you are told by your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse. It is also a good idea to carry with you a list of all the medications that you take, along with their directions. (For a Personal Medication Organizer Form visit: [www.usp.org/pdf/patientSafety/personalMedOrg.pdf](http://www.usp.org/pdf/patientSafety/personalMedOrg.pdf))

Do not share your medicines with anyone, even if they have the same symptoms or condition that you have. It may hurt them.

Do not leave your medicines where children or pets can get them.

Discard unused and expired medicines. Know what to do if you think you have taken an overdose or if a child has taken a medicine by accident. Keep the telephone numbers of your doctor, pharmacist, nurse or poison control center (1-800-222-1222) handy so you can call them at once if needed.