

TAKING MEDICATIONS SAFELY



All medication must be taken correctly to improve or control your ailments. Medicine taken incorrectly may be harmful. Ask your doctor how long you will need to take medicine and what is the purpose of the medicine. Follow the guidelines below for taking medicines more safely.

Organize your medicines. Some people find it helpful to use a pill organizer, especially if taking several different kinds of pills at different times of the day. A quick glance at an organizer will tell you if you have remembered to take your medications on time.. Organizers are sold at most drugstores and are available without a prescription

Keep a list. Make a list of all the medicines and supplements you are currently taking. List any allergies. Keep the list updated and keep it with you. It could save your life!
(see sample record below)

Medication Record for: _____ Pharmacy Phone _____

Allergies: _____

Name of Medicine and directions for use <i>(include strength – dose – frequency)</i>	Times to Take				Purpose
	Morn	Noon	Eve	Bed	
Digoxin 0.125 mg. 1 tablet daily <i>(do not take with antacid)</i> Other name: Lanoxin®	8 AM				HEART PILL. Slows & strengthens heartbeat.
Aspirin 325 mg. 1 tablet daily <i>(take with food)</i> Other name: Ecotrin®	8 Am				PREVENTS HEART ATTACK. Decreases platelet stickiness

Avoid potentially harmful drug interactions

- ◆ Let all of your doctors know about every medicine you are taking, including over-the-counter drugs, birth control pills, herbals, vitamins and other supplements.
- ◆ If possible, try to purchase all of your medicines from one pharmacy.
- ◆ Discard outdated medicines.
- ◆ Store medicines in their original containers. Don't mix different pills into one bottle.
- ◆ Keep medicines in a cool, dry place and out of reach of children and pets.
- ◆ Don't share medicines with friends or family.
- ◆ Heed warning labels on medicine bottles.
- ◆ Find out what you should do if you develop side effects.

Double check your medicines

- ◆ When picking up a new or refilled prescription. Check to see if the pills are a different color or shape. A generic pill may look very different from a brand-name pill. Check the milligram ("mg.") dose. Is it the same dose as you were taking before? Are you to take the same number of pills daily?
- ◆ In a hospital or nursing home. Make sure the nurse checks your nametag before giving you your pills. If the pills do not look familiar to you, ask what each one is for. You should understand what medicines have been prescribed for you and why. If you have further questions, talk to your doctor.
- ◆ At time of discharge from a hospital or nursing home or after a doctor visit. Transitional times pose greater risk. Be sure you have written instructions on how to take your medicines before going home.

If you have questions or concerns, call your pharmacist. Just ask! She's there to help.

Report side effects to your doctor promptly. To report serious, unexpected, life-threatening reactions, call FDA's Med watch program at 1-800-332-1088. Additional resources such as a Physicians Desk Reference, may be available at your pharmacy or local library. For more information about drug interactions, visit web sites www.safemedication.com; <http://nccam.nih.gov>; www.fda.gov/cder/drug/advisory/sjwort.htm; www.rxlist.com; www.lamycenter@rx.umaryland.edu; <http://gerontology.umaryland.edu/docs/lamy.html>; www.womensheartfoundation.org.

HEALTHY HEARTS PROGRAM

Women's Heart Foundation, PO Box 7827, West Trenton, NJ 08628

www.womensheart.org

