

Older adults and medicines



Hints to help you take your medicines right

Older people may have trouble taking their medicines right. Here are some tips to make sure you, or those you care for, get the most from medicines:

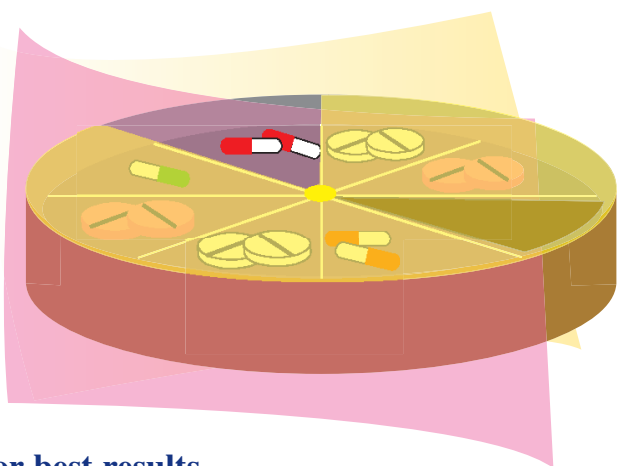
- Know all your medicines and what they are for
- Use a daily or weekly pill organizer. You can buy one in most drugstores. Ask your pharmacist or caregiver to help you fill it. This will help you keep track of your medicines
- Older people may have problems opening pill bottles. Ask your pharmacist for caps that are easy to open. Remember to put these bottles out of reach of children
- Do not stop taking any medicine on your own. Check with your health care provider first. The medicine may still be needed even if you feel fine
- Do not take more or less medicine than what your health care provider prescribed

- Do not skip doses or take extra doses without first talking to your health care provider
- Call your health care provider or pharmacist if you have questions about your medicines

Some medicines might react with each other

As you grow older, you are more likely to take more than 1 medicine at a time. Some of these might react with each other. Some may react with alcohol or with common foods or drinks like cheese or grapefruit juice. This can cause side effects or keep your medicines from working right.

It is a good idea to carry a wallet card that lists all the medicines you take. Then you will always have the list when you are talking to your health care provider or pharmacist or in case of an emergency. Include the medicines your health care provider prescribed for you and those you buy without a prescription. Remember to add any new medicines to your card. Cross off any that you no longer take.



For best results

Always ask your health care provider or pharmacist about your medicines. If you do not understand the answers, ask again. Do not be shy! Your health care providers want to be sure that your medicines work right for you.

Always tell your health care provider

Make sure you get the most from your medicines. Here are some things you should tell your health care provider:

- If you are allergic to any medicines
- If you are taking other medicines, including those you buy without a prescription, such as aspirin, cough medicine, or herbal supplements
- If you are having any problems with your medicines

Your health care provider or pharmacist should tell you how to take a medicine. Make sure you understand before you leave.

**Do not be afraid to ask questions!
You should write down any directions
and look at them again at home.**

Take it right!

Make sure you know these things about each medicine you take:

- Its name
- Why you are taking it
- How much to take each time
- How often to take it
- When to take it each day
- How long to keep taking it
- What foods, drinks, other medicines, or activities to avoid
- What the side effects might be and what to do if you have them
- Where to keep it
- If and when you need to get a refill

Ask your health care provider or pharmacist to give you this information.

Remember, you are the most important part of your health care team!



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