



Use Medicines Wisely

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Office of Women's Health

You take medicines to help with health problems. Medicines can help you live a healthier life. You have to be careful because medicines can also cause problems. There are four things you should do to be safe:

1. Ask questions.
2. Keep a list.
3. Follow directions.
4. Keep medicines away from others.

1. ASK QUESTIONS

Ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist to tell you the facts about each medicine you take.

- What is the name of the medicine?
- What is the medicine for?
- How much do I take?
- When should I take it?
- How will it make me feel?
- Can I take it if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?
- What other medicines or foods should I avoid?



Get a free My Medicines brochure to keep track of your medicines.

2. KEEP A MEDICINE LIST

Write down the important facts about each medicine you take.

- List each medicine.
- Include vitamins and others medications like aspirin and cold medicine.
- Keep the list with you all the time.
- Bring it when you go to the doctor or the drug store.



3. FOLLOW DIRECTIONS

Your medicine may not work if you don't follow the directions. Taking too much or too little can make you very sick.

- Read the directions on the label. Your doctor, nurse, direct support professional, or pharmacist will tell you how much to take.
- Take your medicine as your doctor, nurse, direct support professional, or pharmacist says you should take it. This means that you may take medicines at different times, like every day or every week.
- Take medicine at the same time each day.
- Don't stop taking medicine unless your doctor, nurse, direct support professional, or pharmacist says to.
- Don't share medicines with other people.
- Check the expiration date of your medicine. This is the date that the medicine goes bad. It may not work or be safe for your body after this date. Do not take any medicine after its expiration date.

4. SAFELY THROW OUT MEDICINES

Ask your doctor, nurse, direct support professional, or pharmacist how you should get rid of unused medicines.

Find out if you should:

- Flush it down the toilet or sink.
- Put it in a sealed plastic bag with coffee grounds or kitty litter and throw it in the trash.
- Drop it off at a drug take-back program in your community.

Be sure to scratch off your name and personal information before you put empty pill bottles in the trash.

Make sure that children can't get to medicines including patches that you put in the trash.



Lock It Up.

Keep your medicine locked in a safe place away from kids, teens, and other adults.

Use Medicines Wisely

Avoid common mistakes when taking your medicines. Check the FDA website for more resources for women and their families.

- Get a record keeper to list your medicines.
- Download a booklet to help you talk to your doctor, nurse, direct support professional, or pharmacist about medicine.
- Watch videos to learn other helpful tips.

www.fda.gov/womenshealthsafemeds

