

Senior Health Topics

DRUG SAFETY

Tips for Managing Your Medications

1. **Know your medicines**, including drug names, reasons for their use, potential side effects and how to take them safely.
2. **Keep a current list of your medicines**, and bring it with you when you visit your doctor or pharmacist. Be sure to include over-the-counter medicines, dietary supplements and herbal remedies. Bring this list to all medical appointments.
3. **Take your medicines exactly as directed**. Read all the labels and written instructions before taking each medicine. Ask your pharmacist or doctor if you don't understand the directions.
4. **Continue taking all of your medicines** until the doctor says to stop. Contact your doctor if you experience side effects.
5. **Store medicines in a cool and dry place**. Keep them away from the stove or direct sunlight, and do not use the medicine cabinet in the bathroom, which can be warm and damp.
6. **Keep your medicines in one location** (away from children and pets) unless any need to be refrigerated.
7. **Dispose of unused medicines properly**. Visit <http://tiny.cc/rxdisposal> for more information.
8. **Ask about generic options** if cost is an issue or check available drug-assistance programs at www.talkaboutrx.org.
9. **Use only one pharmacy**, so your pharmacist can monitor your medications. Ask about possible interactions with over-the-counter drugs or dietary/herbal supplements you use.
10. **Talk to your pharmacist or doctor** before taking any over-the-counter medicines, as some can be harmful for seniors.
11. **Keep your healthcare providers informed** about the medicines and supplements you take. Review them together to identify potential risks, or to see if any can be reduced or stopped. Ask if there are simpler ways to take multiple medicines.
12. **Do not share your medicines** with other people, including family.



Free resources available from Ohio KePRO (www.ohiokepro.com/shopping):

"My Medication Profile"



Use this profile to keep an updated list of your medications. Be sure to bring it with you when you visit your doctor or pharmacist.

More Senior Health Resources:
<http://tiny.cc/srhealth>

References: ¹The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Health, United States, 2008*. Hyattsville, MD: NCHS; 2009: 384. Updated July 24, 2008. ²*Ibid.* ³The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Medicare Part D Analytic Data, July - December 2007.

