

Lifeline



Medication management tips

Expert advice
for managing
medications
more easily and
effectively.

Why taking your medications as directed is so important

Managing medications correctly is key to living independently. Many older adults depend on medications to remain healthy, overcome illness, manage chronic conditions and continue living independently.

Statistics show that as we age we take more medications than the general population. According to the Canadian Institute for Health Information, 66% of seniors take 5 or more medications, and 25% take 10 or more.¹

Studies also show that the more medications we take, the greater the risk of a fall or medical emergency because we are more sensitive to potential side effects and adverse drug interactions. Complicated medication schedules

can cause missed doses, incorrect dosages, or even taking medicines at the wrong times. Any of these risks can lead to increased discomfort, inadequate disease prevention, hospitalization, admission to a nursing home, or worse.²

Is it any wonder that doctors and pharmacists stress the importance of taking medications as directed? Yet as many as 50% of patients do not follow their prescribed regimen, with the elderly being less likely to adhere than average. The reasons why are multifaceted, ranging from the patient's lack of understanding or acceptance of why their medications are required and how they should be taken to the cost of the medications.

Did you know?

By not taking medications as directed:

- ✓ There is a 40% increase in the risk of nursing home admission
- ✓ Seniors with high blood pressure have a 540% higher risk of hospitalization, rehospitalisation and premature death, and those with diabetes have a 250% higher risk

Failing to take the proper medication at the right time accounts for 25% of all hospital admissions for those 65 and older.

10 tips for better managing medications

1. Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist to recommend a way to help you remember to take your medications correctly – e.g. a simple, inexpensive pill box or a medication reminder device. These devices, such as the Medication Dispensing Service, dispense medication according to a preset schedule. Alarm reminders notify users it's time to take their pills.
2. Take each medication at the same time every day. A routine can help you remember to take medications as prescribed.
3. Always take your medications for the full course, even if you feel better. Your condition may continue to exist and it could worsen if you stop taking the medication.
4. Keep your medications in the original containers, labeled clearly.
5. Have all of your prescriptions filled at one pharmacy so that the pharmacist can ensure you aren't subjected to adverse drug interactions.
6. Make a list of all of your medications including dosage and timing, keep it with you at all times, and keep it up to date. Your list should include prescriptions, over-the-counter medicines (such as aspirin), herbs (such as echinacea) and supplements (such as calcium). This list will be a handy reference for you and your healthcare providers. And in an emergency, first responders will need to know all the medications you take in order to give you effective treatment.
7. If there is anything you don't understand about how or when to take your medications, ask. Your doctor or pharmacist will be glad to explain.
8. Be sure to ask your doctor or pharmacist about potential side effects so that you will know what to watch for. If you experience side effects, tell your doctor right away.
9. If you have a concern about your ability to pay for your medications, tell your healthcare providers. They may be able to offer you a solution.
10. Be sure to tell your family members and/or caregivers about all of your medications so that they can be your medication adherence assistants.

Tips for caregivers

If your loved one is taking more than one medication, here are some ways that you can help them avoid a fall or medical emergency. Remember: helping your loved one adhere to their medication schedule correctly is an important part of your role.

- ✓ Make a point of asking your loved one what medications they are taking, how often, and what the medications are for.
- ✓ Help your loved one pick out a reminder tool such as a pill box. Check it every so often to make sure it's being used properly.
- ✓ Be on the lookout for signs of any possible side effects or adverse drug interactions and, if you see any, contact your loved one's doctor or pharmacist right away.

Taking charge of your medications

Before leaving your doctor's office, write down the answers to these questions when you get a new prescription and save it for future reference.

Prescription information

1. Name of medicine:

☐ Brand name ☐ Generic name
Is a generic available? ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Why do I need this medicine?

3. When should I take this medicine and for how long?

4. How should I take this medicine?

☐ with meals ☐ on an empty stomach?
☐ with water
☐ other

5. Will this new prescription work safely with the other medicines I am taking, including over-the-counter medicines and herbal remedies?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Taking the medication

6. Is there any food or drink that I should avoid while taking this medicine?

7. Are there any side effects that could occur and what should I do if they occur?

8. What should I do if I miss a dose or if I take too much medicine at one time?

9. What suggestions do you have to help me remember to take my medications?

Ask your pharmacist

Before leaving your pharmacy, be sure to ask these questions*:

1. Is there written information about my medicine that you can give me? (Ask the pharmacist to review the most important information with you. Ask if it is available in large print or, if necessary, in a language other than English.)

2. What is the most important thing I should know about this medicine?

3. Will any test or monitoring be required while I am taking this medicine?
☐ Yes ☐ No

4. Can I get a refill? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If so, how many? _____

5. How should I store this medicine?

* The pharmacist may provide a printout with what you need to know.

Lifeline



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HomeSafe Standard



Access fast, friendly, expert help at the press of a button in and around the home. Designed for people who spend much of their time at home and want to be able to access emergency help at any time, day or night.

HomeSafe with AutoAlert



The FIRST medical alert pendant that can call for help even when you can't.¹ Automatic fall detection makes this an excellent choice for those with a history, risk or fear of falling.

GoSafe Mobile



GoSafe is the mobile solution that gives you the freedom to go out and still have access to Lifeline's quick, expert, friendly help.² It also includes AutoAlert fall protection.¹ Ideal for older adults who want to remain active with peace of mind – at home or on the go.

All services are available with a special Wireless Communicator for customers without a landline telephone.

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1-866-463-2351

www.lifeline.ca

1. Equipment may not detect all falls. Undetectable falls can include slow falls, falls from low heights and slides from seated positions. If able, users should always push their button when they need help.
2. GoSafe coverage outside the home and wireless service in the home provided with sufficient access to/coverage by the applicable third party wireless network. Certain limitations subject to third party cellular provider availability and coverage. Signal range may vary.