

## General Medication Safety Tips:<sup>1</sup>

Medications are prescribed to help you, but they can cause problems if you take too much, too little, take other people's medications, or mix medications that do not go together. Medications are most effective in treating your condition if they are taken as prescribed by your health care provider. It is important to work with your health care team (eg, doctor, nurse, pharmacist, and other health care professionals) to help choose the medication(s) that will be most appropriate for you.

Here are some tips to help you better manage the use of your medications.

### Keep Your Health Care Team Informed

Be sure to:

1. Tell your team about all medications you take, including over-the-counter medications (eg, cough and cold products, antacids, aspirin, vitamins, herbals, and dietary supplements), during each appointment.
2. Make a list of all the medications you take. Carry it with you and take it to all your health care provider appointments.
3. Tell them if you have any medication allergies or if you have problems taking certain types of medications.
4. Tell them about any other medical condition(s) that you have.
5. Tell them if you have had an adverse reaction to a medication prescribed for you or if you discontinued a prescribed medication on your own.
6. Tell them about any lifestyle changes you have made since your last visit (eg, new diet, exercise routine, or if you stopped smoking).

### Keep Yourself Informed

Ask questions about your medication therapy. Here are some examples of questions that you might want to ask your health care provider or pharmacist:

- What are the brand and generic names of this medication?
- What is the purpose of this medication?
- Does this new medication mean I should stop taking other medications?
- How should I take the medication?
- How long do I need to take this medication?
- What are the possible side effects, and what should I do if I have a side effect?
- When should I follow-up to discuss how the medication is working for me?

Talk to your health care provider or pharmacist about questions or concerns that you have. Write them down as they occur and bring the list to each appointment.



## Stay With Your Treatment Plan

Ask your health care provider if your prescriptions need to be refilled and how often they should be refilled. If you are having side effects or other concerns, tell your health care provider. S/he may make changes to your medications or switch you to a different type of medication that you might better tolerate.

## Keep A Record Of Your Medications And Questions

Use the chart that is included to keep track of all your medications and be sure to take it with you to all of your appointments.

Keep track of your questions and concerns and get answers from your health care provider or pharmacist.

### Reference:

1. Your medicine: play it safe. US Department of Health and Human Services Web site. <http://www.ahrq.gov/consumer/safemeds/safemeds.htm>. Accessed April 28, 2009.

**PrescriptionSolutions<sup>®</sup>**

 A UnitedHealth Group Company