Questions to ask your doctor or pharmacist

Older adults are more likely to take multiple medications prescribed by multiple health care providers. When your health care professionals prescribe a new medication or change your dosage, make sure you understand why they are prescribing it, how to take it properly and how it might affect you.

Questions to ask include:

- **Purpose**: What is this medicine supposed to do? How will I know if it’s working? Will I need regular tests to monitor my treatment?
- **Options**: Can this medicine replace another medicine I am taking? Is there another way to treat this condition or symptom without medication?
- **Duration**: How long will I take this medicine? Can I stop once I feel better?
- **Side Effects**: What symptoms or side effects can I expect with this medicine? Which ones should I be the most concerned about?
- **Accidents**: What will happen if I miss a dose or accidentally take too much of this medicine?
- **Reactions**: Can this medicine react with food or drink, over-the-counter medicines, other prescriptions or herbal or vitamin supplements?
- **Addiction**: Can I become addicted to this medicine? Should I be concerned about others having access to this medicine?
- **Ownership**: Are there any legal or safety issues I should consider about buying and owning this medication?
- **Directions**: What does it mean to take this medication… On an empty stomach? With food or meals? With plenty of water? Two/three/four times a day? “As needed”? 

Medication Safety for Older Adults