

Medication Safety for Older Adults



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"?