

Essential Tips on Taking Medications

There are many things you need to know about your medication. It is essential that you are fully informed of what you are taking and why you are taking it. Below are essential tips about medications.

- Ask what you are taking, why you are taking it and how long you will have to take it.
- Ask how it will help your illness.
- Ask what the possible side effects are.
- Take tablets with a neutral fluid e.g. water. Sometimes milk reacts with medication. Acidic juices like orange juice may give you indigestion if taken with your medication.
- If you are getting acid reflux or indigestion, when you take your medications, (even with a neutral fluid,) ask your doctor if you can get your tablets with a sugar coating. This is called “enteric,” coating. Some medications are made this way, but not all.
- If you are still feeling nauseated when you take your medications, ask your doctor if you can take them at night, as if you are asleep you may not feel nauseated.
- If you constantly feel sick on your medication, your doctor can prescribe an additional medication to help with the nausea.
- You can sometimes split your dosages during the day and this can sometimes relieve your side effect. Ask your doctor about this first.
- Some medications, if taken without food and you have been directed to take them with food, can cause stomach bleeds and ulcers e.g. aspirin or anti-inflammatories. Always take as directed on the packs and ask your doctor.
- Never exceed the dose of medication prescribed to you. If you find your symptoms are not relieved you may need your dosage slowly increased or prescribed another drug. Ask your doctor.
- Never give your medication to relieve someone else’s symptoms. They may have an allergy or reaction that you do not know about. This could make them very ill.
- If you are prescribed antidepressants it can take a few days or weeks for you to start feeling the benefit from them. It takes this time for the body to process it.
- If you are worried or confused about your medication please ask your doctor.
- If your medication has not been changed or reviewed for several years, ask your doctor about this.

If you are started on a new medication or your medication has been changed, it is often hard to get into a routine to take them. Sometimes you can forget to take them. There are some tips that can help you.

Tips on remembering when to take your medication

- Find out at what specific times you should take your medication.
- If you have to take them with food, then initially keep your medications near the kitchen to remind you, until you get into a routine.
- If you have to take your medications before or after meals, place your bottles or packs initially in a place you will see them at these times.
- If you are working or going out, carry a small snack bar with you in case you have to take your medications and there is no food about.
- Remember if you go into hospital, they give most of your medications at very set and rigid times. This is because all your medicines are prescribed on a drug chart that has very specific times written on it. If you need flexibility ask them if they can do this, as soon as you are admitted.