



CHECKLIST FOR SAFER DRUG USE

INFORMATION YOU SHOULD PROVIDE

Always give the information listed in 1 and 2 below to your doctor, dentist, or other health care provider so that they can prescribe drugs properly:

1. Your medical history

Tell the important facts of your medical history dealing with drugs. Include allergic reactions, side effects, or adverse reactions you have experienced in the past. Describe the allergic problems you have such as hay fever, asthma, eye watering and itching, throat irritation, and reactions to food. People who have allergies to common substances are more likely to develop side effects or adverse reactions to drugs.

2. Drugs you are taking now

List all prescription and nonprescription drugs. Don't forget common ones such as laxatives; herbal, vitamin, or mineral supplements; skin, rectal, vaginal drugs; antacids; antihistamines; cold and cough remedies; aspirin and aspirin-containing pain pills; motion sickness remedies; weight-loss aids; salt and sugar substitutes; caffeine (in coffee, tea, cola drinks, and cocoa); oral contraceptives; sleeping pills; or "tonics."

INFORMATION TO KNOW BEFORE TAKING A DRUG

- Generic names and brand names of all the drugs you take. Write them down to help you remember. If a drug is a mixture of two or more generic ingredients, learn the names of each.

- Uses for each drug you take.
- How to take each drug—for example, with or without water, or with or without food.
- When to take it.
- What to do if you forget a dose.
- How each drug works in your body.
- Time lapse before drug works.
- Symptoms and treatment of overdose.
- Possible adverse reactions and side effects and what to do if they occur.
- Interactions with other drugs and other substances such as alcohol, food, beverages, cocaine, marijuana, and tobacco. When mixed, they can sometimes cause serious interactions.
- Know all warnings and precautions that apply to special circumstances, such as the following:

1. Reasons (called contraindications) not to take the drug in the presence of some medical conditions.

2. Special considerations for elderly patients, pregnant or breast-feeding women, infants, and children.

3. Information about long-term use, exposure to sun and sunlight, driving, piloting aircraft, hazardous work, or flying in airplanes.

4. Instructions before discontinuing the drug.

OTHER SAFETY TIPS

- Before taking any prescribed drug, discuss plans with the doctor that you may have for elective surgery, pregnancy, and breast-feeding.
- Don't hesitate to ask questions about a drug. We will be able to provide more information if we are familiar with you and your past medical history, especially regarding drugs.
- Never take a drug in the dark! It is always possible to take the wrong one. Recheck the label before each drug use.
- Notify our office about any new or unexpected symptoms you develop while taking a drug. You may need to change drugs or have a dose adjustment.
- Store all drugs out of children's reach. Keep drugs in a cool, dry place, such as a kitchen cabinet or bedroom. Avoid medicine cabinets in bathrooms—they get too moist and warm at times. Keep drugs in their original containers, tightly closed. Don't remove the labels! If directions call for refrigeration, keep the drug cool, but don't freeze it.
- Don't save leftover drugs to use later. Discard them on or before the expiration date shown on the label.
- Do not flush old drugs down the toilet or dispose in a drain. Doing so may result in traces of the drug seeping into the water supply. Throw the drugs in the trash, packaged in childproof containers and/or sealed plastic bags (out of the reach of children and pets). Another option is to check if local household hazardous-waste collection programs—where you're supposed to take motor oil and batteries—accept expired drugs.
- Don't take any drug prescribed for someone else.
- Prior to any surgery (including oral surgery or simple dental procedures), tell the doctor or dentist about all drugs you take or have taken in the past few weeks.
- If you become pregnant while taking any drug, tell your health care provider right away. Avoid all drugs when you are pregnant, if possible.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

You have questions about taking drugs.

Special notes:

More notes on the back of this page