



Medication Safety



■ We take medicine to help us.

- You may take medicine from time to time to help you feel better:
 - For example, when you have a headache or a cold.
- You may also take medicine every day to help you be as healthy as you can be:
 - For example, if you have seizures, diabetes or high blood pressure.

Many people take more than one type of medicine each day.

- People may take more than one type of medicine to treat the same health concern.
- People may take more than one type of medicine because they have more than one health concern.



Medicine can help us, but it can also be very dangerous!

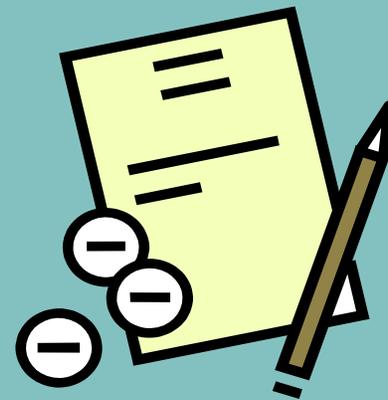
- People may take too much, or too little, of one medicine, and become ill.
- Sometimes two or more medicines do not work well together.
 - When you take two or more types of medicine at the same time or on the same day, one of them may stop working.
 - Sometimes taking two medicines together may make you ill.

Following directions will help you to take medicine safely.

- Prescription and over-the-counter medicines always come with directions that tell you how to use them.
 - Prescription medicines are those your doctor orders for you.
 - Over-the-counter medicines (sometimes called OTC) are those you can buy at a store without a note from a doctor.

It is very important to follow these directions!

- Directions give you information about:
 - How much medicine to take
 - How often to take the medicine
 - When to take the medicine - for example, with a meal or before bedtime



Before you take any medicine, ask yourself these questions:

- Does this medicine **belong to me**?
 - If it is a prescription, the medicine should have your name on it.
- Is this the **right medicine** for me to take?
- Am I taking the **right amount**?
- Is this the **right time** to take my medicine?
- Am I taking the medicine in the **right way**?
 - Medicine can be swallowed, rubbed on your skin, given in a shot, or taken in other ways.

Tell your doctor and supports what medicines you are taking.

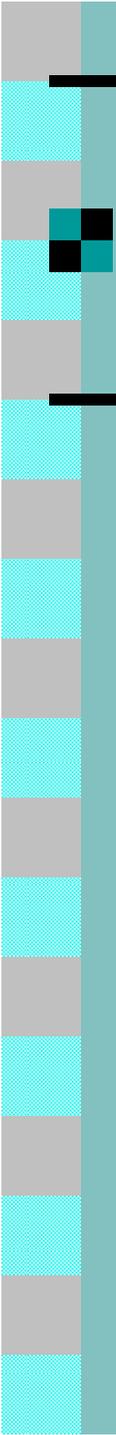
- Before you start taking a new medicine, it is important that you tell your doctor or pharmacist what medicines you are already taking.
- They will tell you if you can take the new medicine along with the others.



There are many things others can do to help you take medicine safely.

- You can ask your doctor, a nurse, or a pharmacist to explain directions about your medicine to you.
- Your supports and family can learn about your medicine and can help you to take the right dose.



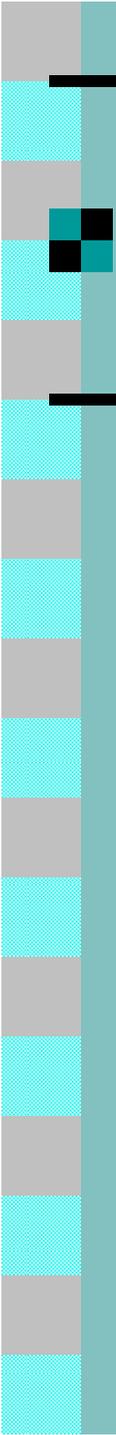


You can tell others if the medicine makes you feel better or worse.

- Medicines can cause changes, or “side effects,” in your body that you do not want.
- Side effects can be:
 - Physical (such as an upset stomach or thirst)
 - Behavioral (such as feeling sleepy)
 - Emotional (such as feeling angry or sad)
- If you feel side effects, you should **TELL** someone.

Asking questions can help others make sure you take medicine safely.

- Some questions you might want to ask are:
 - What is this medicine supposed to do?
 - How should I take this medicine?
 - How long will it be before I know it is working?
 - What should I do if I forget to take my medicine?
 - Should this medicine be taken with food or drink?



Here are a few more questions to ask.

- Can I take this medicine with other medicines?
- What are the side effects?
- If I feel side effects, what should I do?
- Should I keep this medicine in a special place?

You can stay safe and healthy by following some simple rules.

- Learn about the medicines you are taking.
- Follow directions.
- Ask yourself questions about your medicine before you take it.
- Ask others about your medicine.
- Tell others how you feel.

