

Medication tips for patients

Keeping your medications in check

You play an important role in using your medications safely!

You may have been prescribed a few (or perhaps more than a few) medications. Medications may have side effects but, when used responsibly, are an important part of staying healthy. You and your health team should work together to be sure that you are taking the right medications for your health problems. Here are three helpful tips:

#1 Keep your medication records accurate

- keep a list of all medications you take, including over-the-counter remedies and dietary/herbal supplements, and bring this list to each office visit
- try to use only one pharmacy, preferably one that can provide you with a printed list of all your prescriptions

#2 Learn as much as possible about your medications

- talk to your health team member and to your pharmacist and get all the information you can about your medications, including side effects to watch out for
- ask whether you should avoid certain foods, alcohol, or supplements when taking any of your medications
- follow all instructions and the prescribed dosing schedule for all of your medications and consider using a calendar, pill box, or blister pack to help you remember

#3 Talk regularly to your health team

- tell your health team member if you've had previous bad reactions to any medications
- promptly report any new symptoms such as tiredness, problems with bowel or bladder, confusion, falls, weakness, depression, tremor, hallucinations, anxiety, dizziness or rashes, especially if you have recently started a new medication
- ask your health team if there is anything you can do (for example, exercise or diet change) instead of taking medications for your illness
- ask your health team to review your medications every 6 months and ask them "how you will know a drug is still working?" and "when you can stop taking a drug?"

Helpful reading: www.safemedication.com