

What You Should Know About Taking Medicines

Read the label before you take any medicine.

Look for:

- ▶ **A list of ingredients**-If you know that you are allergic to anything in the medicine, don't use it. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about using a different medicine.
- ▶ **Warnings**-Read these carefully. Be sure you understand them.
- ▶ **The expiration date**-Do not use a medicine after the date shown on the bottle. It may not work very well past that date.

To avoid problems:

- ▶ Keep your medicines organized. You may wish to use a pill box that is divided by days of the week to help you.
- ▶ Do not skip doses of your medicines.
- ▶ Do not take extra doses of medicine unless your doctor suggests it.
- ▶ Do not share medicines with anyone, or take anyone else's medicines.
- ▶ Do not take medicines in the dark or without your glasses or contacts.
- ▶ If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, talk to your doctor before taking **any** medicines.
- ▶ If there are children in your home, be sure your medicines are in childproof containers. Keep your medicines in a place where children cannot get them.

Ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about your medicines:

- ▶ What is the name of the medicine?
- ▶ Is there a generic (not brand name) medicine available? (These types of medicines are usually cheaper.)
- ▶ Why I am taking this medicine?
- ▶ Should I take this medicine on an empty stomach or with food?
- ▶ Is it safe to drink alcohol with this medicine?
- ▶ How much should I take? How long should I take it?
- ▶ What side effects should I watch for? What should I do if I have side effects?

Keep a record of all prescription medicines, over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbs you take. Use the chart below, and take it with you when you go to the doctor. It's also a good idea to take the bottles of your medicines with you.

This information is general. If your doctor tells you something different, follow his or her instructions.

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For more information about women's health issues, stop by our Resource Center at 2000 West First Street, Piedmont Plaza II, 1st Floor, Winston Salem, NC 27104, visit our website at <http://www.wakehealth.edu/WHCOE/> or contact us at (336) 713-4220.