



## After you have the medicine, and before you leave the pharmacy

- Look to be sure you have the right medicine. If you've bought the medicine before, make sure this medicine has the same shape, color, size, markings, and packaging. Anything different? Ask your pharmacist. If it seems different when you use it, tell your pharmacist, doctor, or other healthcare professional.
- Be sure you know the right dose for the medicine and you know how to use it. Any questions? Ask your pharmacist.
- Make sure there is a measuring spoon, cup, or syringe for liquid medicine. If the medicine doesn't come with a special measuring tool, ask your pharmacist about one. (Spoons used for eating and cooking may give the wrong dose. Don't use them.)
- Be sure you have any information the pharmacist can give you about the medicine. Read it and save it.
- Get the pharmacy phone number, so you can call back.

**GO to [www.fda.gov/usemedicinesafely](http://www.fda.gov/usemedicinesafely) to learn about**

- choosing the medicine that's best for you
- buying medicine from sources you can trust
- using medicine to increase its safety and effectiveness



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Publication No. (FDA) CDER 08-1930

**STOP**

**Stop and remember that all medicines have risks**

**LEARN**

**Learn how to use your medicine to increase the benefits**

**GO**

**Go inside this brochure for the U.S. Food & Drug Administration's**

# Tips for Talking with Your Pharmacist

**to learn how to use medicines safely**



## Use these tips for talking with your pharmacist.

Your pharmacist can help you learn how to use your prescription and nonprescription (over-the-counter) medicines safely and to increase the benefits and decrease the risks. You can also use these tips when talking with your other healthcare professionals.

## Tell your pharmacist

### Tell your pharmacist...

- everything you use. Keep a record and give it to your pharmacist. Make sure you put all the prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, herbals, and other supplements you use. Your pharmacist will use this to keep his/her records up-to-date and help you use medicine safely.
- if you've had any allergic reactions or problems with medicines, medicines with dietary supplements, medicines with food, or medicines with other treatments.
- anything that could affect your use of medicine, such as, if you have trouble swallowing, reading labels, remembering to use medicine, or paying for medicine.
- before you start using something new. Your pharmacist can help you avoid medicines, supplements, foods, and other things that don't mix well with your medicines.
- if you are pregnant, might become pregnant, or if you are breast feeding.

## Ask your pharmacist

- What are the brand and generic (non-brand) names?
- What is the active ingredient? Can I use a generic?
- What is this for, and how is it going to help me?
- How and when should I use it? How much do I use?
- How long should I use it? Can I stop using the medicine or use less if I feel better?
- What should I do if I ...miss a dose? ....use too much?
- Will this take the place of anything else I am using?
- When will the medicine start working? How should I expect to feel?
- Are there any special directions for using this?
- Should I avoid any other medicines, dietary supplements, drinks, foods, activities, or other things?
- Is there anything I should watch for, like allergic reactions or side effects? What do I do if I get any?
- Will I need any tests to check the medicine's effects (blood tests, x-rays, other)? When will I need those?
- How and where should I keep this medicine?
- Is there a medication guide or other patient information for this medicine?
- Where and how can I get more written information?

➔ More important tips on the back