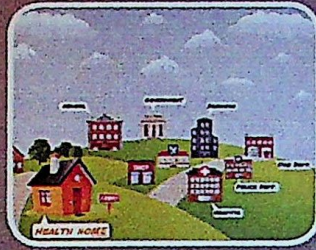


A Guide to Understanding Your Medications



The Tools You Need to Decode Your Prescription & Over-the-Counter Medications

A Guide to Understanding Your Medications

When used properly, prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) drugs can be beneficial to our health. But, if they are used improperly, they also have the potential to be dangerous—even deadly. For this reason, it is important that you understand which questions to ask and how to read drug labels for the medications that you are taking. Use this handy tool to as a guide to help you ask the right questions and decode prescription and OTC drug labels before you take any medication.

Before taking any medication you need to ask...

1. What is this drug for? What is this drug meant to do? Know why you are taking this drug and what the drug's intended purpose is.
2. Are there side effects of this drug? Is this drug addictive? Are there alternative treatments? Understand the risks and side effects of the drug.
3. Are there any tests required with this medication? Be aware of any monitoring tests that you need to complete to ensure your safety.
4. How do I take this drug properly? What is the proper dosage? Know how to take the drug (on an empty stomach, what time of day, how much to take, how many times a day, until all pills are gone etc.) Proper adherence is extremely important to your safety and the drug's effectiveness.
5. What should I avoid while taking this drug? Know what foods, drinks, medications, vitamins etc. to avoid when taking this drug.
6. How do I store this drug? Know how to store this drug (temperature, humidity etc.).
7. How do I dispose of this drug if I have extra left over? Know how to dispose of this drug once you have completed the recommended course.
8. What is the name of this medication? Does this medication have a generic name? Does this medication come in generic form? Did my physician prescribe the generic form or original? Check to make sure that the name of the drug on your prescription matches the drug that you have been given. A generic maybe available and this may offer substantial reductions in cost; however, it is important to discuss any switch with your physician or pharmacist.
9. Is this drug safe? Know how to find more information about the drug's safety, visit:
<http://www.fda.gov/safety/medwatch/default.htm>
10. What if I have a bad reaction? Know how to report any adverse effects from a drug, call your physician immediately and visit:
<https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/medwatch/medwatch-online.htm>

If you are still unsure or have questions after reading the medication label, call your doctor or pharmacist. They will be happy to assist you with your concerns.

Understanding Your Over-the-Counter Medication Label

Drug Facts

Active ingredient (in each tablet) Purpose
 Chlorpheniramine maleate 2 mg Antihistamine

Therapeutic substance in drug

Product type

Uses Temporarily relieves these symptoms due to hay fever or other upper respiratory allergies:

Symptoms or diseases the drug treats

- sneezing ■ runny nose ■ itchy, watery eyes
- itchy throat

Warnings

Ask a doctor before use if you have

When not to use this drug, when to stop taking it, when to see a doctor, and possible side effects

- glaucoma
- a breathing problem such as emphysema or chronic bronchitis
- trouble urinating due to an enlarged prostate gland

Ask a doctor or pharmacist before use if you are taking tranquilizers or sedatives

When using this product

- You may get drowsy ■ Avoid alcoholic drinks
- Alcohol, sedatives, and tranquilizers may increase drowsiness
- Be careful when driving a motor vehicle or operating machinery
- Excitability may occur, especially in children

If pregnant or breastfeeding, ask a health professional before use.

Keep out of reach of children. In case of overdose, get medical help or contact a Poison Control Center right away.

Directions

Adults and children 12 years and over	Take 2 tablets every 4 to 6 hours; not more than 12 tablets in 24 hours
Children 6 years to under 12 years	Take 1 tablet every 4 to 6 hours; not more than 6 tablets in 24 hours
Children under 6 years	Ask a doctor

Read carefully: how much to take, how often to take it, and when to stop taking it

More information on how to store the drug

Other information Store at 20-25° C (68-77° F)

- Protect from excessive moisture

Other things in the drug, such as colors or flavorings

Inactive ingredients D&C yellow no. 10, lactose, magnesium stearate, microcrystalline cellulose, pregelatinized starch

Understanding Your Prescription Drug Label

Pharmacy name and address

Number used by the drugstore to identify this drug for your refills

Person who gets this drug

Instructions about how often and when to take this drug

Name of drug and strength of drug

Number of refills before certain date

Doctor's name

Drugstore phone number

Prescription fill date

Don't use this drug past this date

Local Pharmacy
123 MAIN STREET
ANYTOWN, USA 11111 (800) 555-5555

DR. C. JONES

NO 0060023-08291 DATE 06/23/09

JANE SMITH
456 MAIN STREET ANYTOWN, US 11111

TAKE ONE CAPSULE BY MOUTH THREE TIMES DAILY FOR 10 DAYS UNTIL ALL TAKEN

AMOXICILLIN 500MG CAPSULES

QTY MRG
NO REFILLS - DR. AUTHORIZATION REQUIRED
USE BEFORE 06/23/12
SLF/SLF

Adapted from www.womenshealth.gov