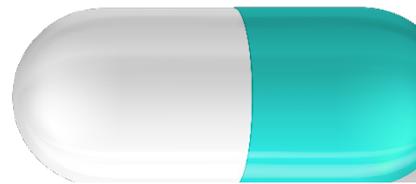


Safe Medication Use as an Older Adult

Medication can help improve performance for activities of daily living. It can help to limit pain, reduce symptoms of disease, increase

functioning, and so much more. However, medication is only beneficial when used appropriately. This resource is filled with questions to ask your doctor and pharmacist, and several tips and tricks to ensure safe medication use.



Questions to ask your Doctor:

- What is the name of the medicine and why am I taking it?
- What medical condition does this medicine treat?
- How many times a day should I take it? At what time?
- How much medicine should I take?
- Should I take the medicine with food or not? Is there anything I should not eat or drink when taking this medicine?
- How long will it take this medicine to work?
- Will this medicine cause problems if I am taking other medicines?
- Is it safe for me to drive while taking this medication?
- When should I stop taking the medicine?
- If I forget to take my medicine, what should I do?
- What side effects can I expect? What should I do if I have a problem?
- You can find these questions and more at <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/safe-use-medicines-older-adults#questions>

When to talk to the Pharmacist:

- If you have difficulty swallowing pills, talk to your pharmacist to find more options.
- If you don't know how to take the medication, when to take it, side effects, or any other questions, you can ask your pharmacist.
- If you have difficulty opening medicine bottles, you may be able to ask your pharmacist for an easier alternative.

What to do if you experience side effects:

- Side effects are any unwanted or unexpected feelings that may be due to the medicine you are taking. While some are minor, others can be life threatening. They can impact your participation in daily living and limit your overall performance.
- When experiencing any side effects, consult your doctor. To be as accurate as possible, note and write down the side effects as they happen.
- Call your doctor right away. If any major changes occur, call 9-1-1.

Keeping track of medications:

- Make a list
- Keep all medication in the same location
- Use a daily pill organizer, one for AM and one for PM if needed
- Record expiration dates and when to refill
- Keep out of reach of young children and pets
- Bring a list and let others know what you are currently taking, in case of an emergency

Medication Safety

- Follow instructions
- Use the directed amount
- Take on time
- Do not mix
- Do not share
- Do not stop without consulting a medical professional.

Opioid Addiction

As we age, our bodies become susceptible to more physical ailments. To treat and reduce pain, opioids are often prescribed. Over time, our tolerance for pain medication increases and higher doses may be prescribed. Over time, we may not even realize how our bodies become addicted to this medication.

For more facts about opioid addiction, check out this website <https://betteraddictioncare.com/2018/04/elderly-opiate-addiction/>

Signs & Symptoms of Opioid Addiction

- Defensive attitude
- Blaming others
- Isolation
- Constipation
- Drowsiness
- Elation and euphoria
- Constricted pupils
- Slowed breathing
- Nodding off or losing consciousness
- Mood swings
- For more information on these signs and symptoms:
<https://whitesandstreatment.com/2017/06/22/signs-of-opioid-addiction-in-adults/>

If you, or someone you know is suffering from addiction, <https://americanaddictioncenters.org/rehab-guide/elderly>, lists several treatment option and has many great resources.