

Center for Medicines & Healthy Aging

Questions to Ask Your Doctor or Pharmacist About Your Medicines

The following questions would best be directed to your **doctor** at the time the medicine is being prescribed or considered.

What is the name of the medicine?

What is the medicine for?

What are the benefits of the medicine to me?

What are the risks of this medicine?

Are there non-drug alternatives, such as diet or lifestyle changes?

Is there a less expensive medicine that could be used instead?

When should I expect the medicine to start working, and how will I know if it is working?

How long will I have to take the medicine?

What is the dosage form of the medicine? Pill, Liquid, Inhaler, etc.

NOTE: *If the medicine is in any form other than a pill, ask about any special techniques or devices for administering the medication. For example, liquids that you need to “shake well” before using, or special instructions for the use of inhalers, suppositories, eye drops, or patches.*

Are there any other special instructions to follow?

How much of the medicine do I take?

Will this new medicine work safely with the other prescription and non-prescription medicines or dietary supplements I am taking?

What are the possible side effects of the medicine?

What do I do if I have a side effect from the medicine?

When will you check to see if the medicine is working?

Do I need to have any tests or monitoring while I’m taking this medicine? Do I need to report back to the doctor?

Other questions or concerns you want to talk about with your doctor.

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Continued

The following questions would best be directed to your **pharmacist** at the time the medicine is being dispensed.

How much of the medicine do I take?

When do I take the medicine? For example, does “four times a day” mean you have to take it in the middle of the night?

Should the medicine be taken with water or food?

Should the medicine be taken before, during, or after meals?

Can I take it at the same time as other medicines? If not, which ones?

Will this new medicine work safely with the other prescription and non-prescription medicines or dietary supplements I am taking?

What should I do if I miss or forget a dose?

What food, drinks, other medicines, or activities should I avoid while taking the medicine?

How and where should I store this medicine? Does the medicine require refrigeration?

What are the possible side effects of the medicine?

What do I do if I have a side effect from the medicine?

Can I get a refill on the medicine? If so, how often?

Is there any written information about the medicine I can take home? You can also ask if it is available in large print or a language other than English if you need it.

Ask your pharmacist any questions that may not have been answered by your doctor.