

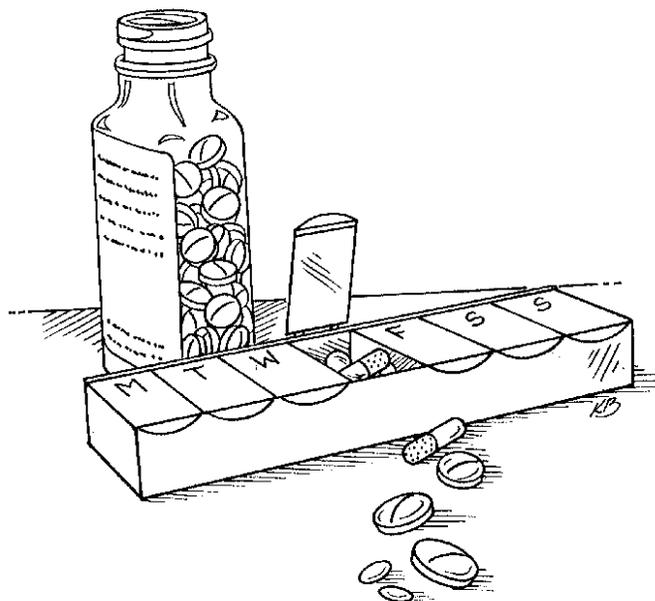


How Do I Manage My Medicines?

Taking medicine may be new to you, and there may be a lot to remember. For example, why are you taking it? What time should you take it? How often do you take it, and how many pills do you take?

It's very important to take medicine the right way — just as your doctor tells you.

If you don't follow your doctor's directions, what could happen? First of all, if medicine isn't taken the right way, it may not work. It could also cause side effects that may be mild — or very harmful. Without knowing it, you could counteract one medicine by taking it with another. Not taken properly, medicine can also make you feel sick or dizzy.



How can I remember to take my medicine?

- Take it at the same time every day.
- Take it along with meals or other daily events, like brushing your teeth.
- Use special pill boxes that help you keep track, like the day-of-the-week divided ones found at drugstores.
- Ask the people who are close to you to help remind you.
- Keep a “medicine calendar” near your medicine and note every time you take your dose.
- Put a sticker or reminder note on your medicine cabinet or refrigerator.

What else should I know?

- Store your medicine the way your doctor or pharmacist tells you. Keep medicine in original containers, or label new containers.
- Keep track of what pills you can and can't take together, including over-the-counter medicines.
- Always get your prescription filled on time, so you don't run out.
- Try to see the same pharmacist each time.
- Don't take more of your medicine than the prescribed dose.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist before buying a new over-the-counter medicine, such as an antihistamine or “cold tablets,” to be sure they won't interfere with your prescribed medicine.
- Always check with your doctor before you stop taking a medicine.
- If you have any questions about your pills, make a note to remind yourself to ask your doctor or pharmacist.
- Tell your doctor if you have any side effects.

- Write down the names and doses of medicines you are taking. If you go to more than one doctor, take your updated medication list with you to each visit.
- Keep all medicines out of the reach of children.

My medicine

Ask your healthcare professional to help you fill in the blanks below.

Name of Medicine	What it looks like	Dose	What it's for	When to take it	Doctor

How can I learn more?

1. Talk to your doctor, nurse or other health-care professionals. If you have heart disease or have had a stroke, members of your family also may be at higher risk. It's very important for them to make changes now to lower their risk.
2. Call 1-800-AHA-USA1 (1-800-242-8721) or visit americanheart.org to learn more about heart disease.
3. For information on stroke, call 1-888-4-STROKE (1-888-478-7653) or visit StrokeAssociation.org.
We have many other fact sheets and educational booklets to help you make healthier choices to reduce your risk, manage disease or care for a loved one.
Knowledge is power, so *Learn and Live!*

Do you have questions or comments for your doctor?

Take a few minutes to write your own questions for the next time you see your doctor. For example:

How long should I take my medicine?

What if I forget to take a medicine?

Should I avoid any foods or other medicines?

Your contribution to the American Heart Association supports research that helps make publications like this possible.

The statistics in this sheet were up to date at publication. For the latest statistics, see the *Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics Update at americanheart.org/statistics.*

©2007, American Heart Association 10/07LS1466



American Heart Association | American Stroke Association

Learn and Live.