

Medication Safety

Make a Medication List

You can download a FREE **Medication List** form at www.ethicalhealthpartnerships.org in the Patient Education section.

If you create your own, we recommend that you create your list on your computer where you can easily update it regularly.

If you make your own list, include the following:

- **ALLERGIC TO:** list medications and the allergic reaction you had
- **NEGATIVE SIDE EFFECTS:** list any medications that had negative side effects for you, especially any that your doctor stopped because of side effects. Say what the side effects were.

For each medication include:

- NAME OF MEDICATION:
- Dosage: (be careful of decimal points!)
- How much you take, how often you take it, if you take with or without food, times, etc.
- What it's for:
- When you started the medication:
- Prescribing doctor and telephone number:
- When you changed dosage or stopped:
- Doctor who stopped or changed the dosage, telephone number, date of change.
- Name and location or telephone number of pharmacy.

Finally, list any over the counter medication, herbs, supplements, minerals, vitamins that you are take:

- Name of Substance:
- Dosage: (be careful of decimal points!)
- How much you take, how often you take it, if you take with or without food, times, etc.
- What it's for:
- When you started the medication:

What to do with your list

Keep it updated!

Update your list every time you start, stop, or change a medication or other substance.

Put a copy in your home health file:

Create a health file for yourself and each member of your household. Keep a copy of your Medication list as the first page. Tell another adult in your home where the files are. If you live alone, tell your closest family member where you keep the file.

Check it for Accuracy:

Have another adult double-check your list against the containers of your meds.

Give a copy of your list to:

- a family member or close friend who does not live in your home.
- all doctors, dentists or other professionals or facilities that are involved in your health care.
- Always take it with you when you are seeing a new doctor, going for tests, receiving outpatient treatments, have outpatient surgery, or are hospitalized.
- Instruct your family member / friend to make sure it gets to the hospital if you are unable to take it. Often hospitals want actual containers of the medications to be sure of the dosage.

We also recommend making a wallet size list of the medications and dosage. Include the names and telephone number of your doctor(s) and an emergency contact. Keep the list behind your driver's license so that it can be found if you are unable to direct emergency personnel. Remember to update your card regularly.

When Your Doctor Prescribes a New Medication:

- 1. Take notes on EVERYTHING!** (It's a good idea to take a friend or family member with you who can take good notes.) **Start with the name and correct spelling of the medication (both brand name and generic name) and the dosage.** Ask if you can take the generic.
- 2. Be clear about the purpose of the medication.** And ask your doctor to write the purpose of the medication on the prescription to help insure that you get the correct medication.
- 3. Be clear about how you should take the medication:** Ask your physician how much you should take, how often and whether you should take it with or without food, and what times of day you should take it. If it is liquid, how should you measure it?

Continued . . .

- 4. What should you do if you forget a dose?**
- 5. For how long should you take the medication? If you feel better, should you keep taking it?**
- 6. Find out about refills:** When the prescription ends, should you stop taking it, or contact your doctor's office for an appointment or instructions?
- 7. Will this medication interact with any of the substances on your Medication List?**
- 8. Are there any dietary or lifestyle modifications you should make with this medication?**
- 9. What are normal side effects can you expect and what should you do?**
- 10. What symptoms could indicate something potentially serious and what should you do if any occur?** (Should you stop medication immediately? Be clear, because stopping some medications suddenly can be dangerous.)
- 11. Repeat back to your physician the name, instructions, symptoms you should watch for and what you should do, and other information** so that you can check your understanding.
- 12. If you are given samples from your doctor's office, make sure you have a label on it or written instructions about taking the medication,** purpose, precautions, and symptoms that could indicate a serious reaction.
- 13.** When you fill your prescription, your pharmacist can answer any other questions that occur to you about the medication. Whenever possible, use the same pharmacy. It helps to get to know your pharmacist, and it makes it easier in an emergency to track down records of your medications.
- 14. Get the information sheet your pharmacy has on the medication.**
- 15. When you get refills, double-check the medication you are given, both with name and dosage, and also appearance.** If it looks different, ask your pharmacist.
- 16. Double check the name of the medication and dosage on the bottle with your notes.** If you have any questions or see any discrepancies, ask your pharmacist about it. Call your doctor's office if you are not clear.
- 17.** Do not take anyone else's medication, even if it is the same name as yours.
- 18.** If you take medications at night, turn on the light to make sure you are taking the right thing.

When You Travel:

1. Make sure you have enough of your medications to last your trip and include a couple of days extra in case you are delayed.
2. Keep your medication in carry on luggage so that you have access to them if needed and to have them with you in the event some of your luggage is misplaced by the airline. Include your Medication List, the name and telephone number of your doctor and the number of your pharmacy.
3. Medications are required to be in their original containers to go through security. Also if you use syringes (like for insulin shots), you might need to take a copy of your prescription with you.
4. If you are going to a different time zone, check with your physician about how you should take your medication while travelling.

Continued . . .

When You Go Into the Hospital:

1. Take your Medication List, or instruct your family member or friend to bring it for your healthcare professionals.
2. When you are given medications (including IVs) in the hospital, ask (or have a family member ask) what you are being given, how much and for what purpose. It is good to ask your physician what you will be given and why and then ask the nurse when she gives it to you. It provides a way to double-check.
3. Make sure the nurse checks your ID before giving you medication.
4. Don't be afraid to ask questions if you are unsure of something!
5. If you feel any side effects, let your nurse know right away.
6. When you are ready to go home, ask your doctor or nurse what medications you should take (have family member write down), asking the same questions listed above. If you have stopped or changed any medications while in the hospital, ask if you should resume them when you go home.
7. Update your Medication List as soon as possible.

We are committed to your safety. If you have questions about your medication, call our office:

NOTES:

<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>