

Day 7: Medication Use

- They say that knowledge is the best medicine! So how much do you know about your medications?
- It is important for us to understand what we are taking, how to take it, why we are taking it and what side-effects might be associated with the medication
- Taking over 4 medications puts us at risk for having a fall. It is not always possible, but reducing the amount of medication that we are taking can improve our risk of falling
- Feel free to visit your local pharmacist

General Tips Regarding the Proper Use of your Medication:

- Do not expect a prescription every time you go to the doctor. Your doctor will professionally evaluate your condition and only prescribe medication if necessary
- If your doctor prescribes medication often, be sure to ask WHY you are taking it. Most people are over medicated these days and are taking medications that they do not need
- Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of the medications that you are taking, including non-prescription and herbal remedies
- Tell your doctor if you have ever had a reaction to any medication and any side effects that you may have experienced from your medication
- Before leaving your doctor's or pharmacist's office, ensure that you understand the instructions and how to take your medication. Call your pharmacist about what to do if you miss a dose
- Store your medication in a safe place that is not in direct sunlight and not in the bathroom. Ask your pharmacist where you should store your medication
- Store your medication in its original container, and out of reach of children
- Finish all of your medication unless your doctor instructs you not to. Do not save medications! Return unused medication to your doctor's or pharmacist's office
- Check expiry dates and return expired medication to your doctor's or pharmacist's office
- Take your medication exactly as directed



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- **Good questions to ask your doctor or pharmacist**
 - √ Why am I taking this medication?
 - √ What is the name of this medication?
 - √ Are there any alternatives?
 - √ Is there any patient information available regarding this medication?
 - √ How often should I take this medication?
 - √ When should I take it? (for example, with, without meals, etc.)
 - √ Is there anything that I should avoid while on this medication? (such as alcohol, smoking cigarettes, etc.)
 - √ Can I drive a car while taking this medication? What about exercise and travel?
 - √ How should I store the medication?
 - √ What should I do if I miss a dose?
 - √ What do the symbols and stickers on the medication container mean?
 - √ Are there any side effects with this medication? Which ones should I report?
 - √ What if I need a refill?
 - √ Will this medication affect any of the other medications I am taking?
 - √ Remember to ask about your non-prescriptions and herbal medication
 - √ Medications and alcohol use: Visit your pharmacist at least twice a year to ensure that you are taking the correct medications the correct way
- It is important to consider that part of our health and happiness depends on how we live day to day. By eating well and staying physically and socially active we can improve our health
- There are many common problems that do not require medication. Some problems even go away on their own
- Overall, to avoid health conditions (to avoid the use of medications):
 - Take care of yourself and remember that prevention is the best cure
 - Be socially and mentally active. Stay in touch with family and friends
 - Do not smoke, avoid alcohol
 - Eat healthy
 - Exercise regularly
 - Be positive and enjoy life!

