



Quick Tips— When Getting a Prescription

- It is important to understand how your medicine plays an important role in your getting better.
- By learning as much as possible about your prescription, you can take an active part in your health care.

When you are prescribed a new medication, ask your doctor or pharmacist the following questions:

- What is the name of the medicine?
What is it supposed to do?
- Is it okay to substitute a less-expensive generic medicine for the name brand? Will it work the same?
- What is the dose of the medicine? Are there food, drinks, other medicines I should avoid while taking this medicine?
- Are there possible side effects of the medicine?
What should I do if they occur?



Questions, continued:

- How many refills of this prescription can I get?
- What should I do if I miss a dose?
- What should I do if I accidentally take more than the recommended dose?
- Is there any written information I can take home with me? (Most pharmacies have information sheets that you can use as an at-home reference.)

When you pick up your medicine at the pharmacy, check to be sure it is the medicine you were prescribed by your doctor.



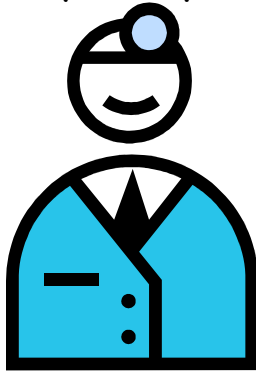
When your doctor prescribes a medication for you, make sure to give the following information:

- The names of all medicines you are currently taking, including both over-the-counter and prescription medication.
- Any concerns you have about using your medication.
- If you are allergic to any medication or have had side effects from a medication that has been prescribed to you.



During your treatment, you should schedule a follow up visit to monitor your progress. Make sure to tell your doctor about:

- Any problems you are having with your prescription.
- Any side effects or problems you have had since starting to take the prescription.
- Any new prescriptions that another doctor may have



given you **and** any over-the-counter medicines that you started taking since your last doctor's visit.

- How you are feeling since starting the medication.

Though your doctor or pharmacies should always be your first choice for information, you can find additional information about prescription medications from the National Institutes of Health at MedlinePlus. Access this link:

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginformation.html> , or have a librarian help you get connected.

The information contained in this handout is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to be used as a replacement for discussion with your health care provider. Speak with your doctor for any specific medical concerns. Always check with your doctor before making any changes with your medication therapy or lifestyle.

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<http://www.ahrq.gov/consumer/quicktips/tipprescrip.htm> (accessed August 2, 2006)