

Questions to Ask About Medications

Questions for the doctor when a new medication is prescribed:

- What is this medicine prescribed to treat? Will it treat my condition or just treat some of my symptoms?
- Is there anything to treat my condition or is this a condition that treating the symptoms is the answer? Remember, that sometimes it is all right to just treat the symptoms.
- How does the medicine work in the body?
- Is there any other alternative to treat this condition with a lifestyle change? Such as diet or exercise or reducing stress?
- Will my other conditions be affected by this medication?
- Can this medication be taken at the same time as your other medications? If a drug must be taken at an inconvenient time (such as in the middle of the night), ask about another alternative.
- This is the time to discuss problems with swallowing pills if this is a problem for the senior. Ask if the medication is available in another form?
- What are the common side effects? What should I pay attention to?
- What actions need to be taken should an allergic or bad reaction occur?
- Should an allergic reaction occur, do we stop taking the medication, or start treating the new condition with another drug?
- Is it possible that this medicine will interact with other medications, prescription and non-prescription that I am taking now?



- What is the proper dose for a person at this age and weight?
- Can a lower dose be prescribed without adverse effects?
- What time/times of the day should this medication be taken?
- Should it be taken with meals or beverages? Is it safe to drink alcoholic beverages while taking this medication?
- Are there foods, beverages or activities that should be avoided while on this medication?
- Does this medication need to be taken with a whole glass of water with it?
- When will the medicine begin to take effect? How will I know it is working? Is there a particular goal you are trying to achieve with this medication?
- How long will it take to assess whether the drug is working? If it does work, will there one day be a time to stop taking the drug?
- What should I do if a dose is missed?
- How long will I have to take this medicine? Will we need a refill? Will you order refills now or will we need to come in for another visit?
- Is a generic (non-brand name) drug or another brand in the same drug class is available at a lower cost.
- To keep costs down, can you prescribe a higher dose? Then can it be safely prescribed and the pill cut in half?
- Can you have two prescriptions? One for a one-week supply of a new medication to see if it can be tolerated without any side effects. Or can you give me samples for me to try before I purchase them?
- Is this habit forming or addicting?
- If it is habit forming, how bad might the withdrawal phase be should it be decided to stop taking it?





- Do you have written information about the medicine that I can take home with me?
- How much does each dose cost?
- Will my insurance cover this medication?

Questions for the pharmacist:

- Could you please review this prescription with me?
- Is the generic version just as good as the name brand? Is it less expensive?
- How should I store this? Does it need to be refrigerated? Away from heat or light?
- Can the pills be crushed or capsules opened and mixed with food for easier swallowing?
- Ask for large print for the vision impaired.
- Ask for easy to open bottles.
- Ask that the expiration date be put on the bottle.
- If you forgot to get two prescriptions, ask the pharmacist if you can get just a week's supply at a time. This will save you money to avoid paying for medication you may not be able to take. It is also a way to make sure that there are no adverse reactions to a new medication.
- Ask the pharmacist to review the directions and side effects with you.

