

## Be Smart About Medicine

### Write down all the medicines you take.

- Include prescriptions, over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, herbals and minerals.
- Write down any allergies you have.

### Tell the doctor, nurse, or pharmacist if you are trying to have a baby, pregnant or nursing.

- Some medicines may harm your baby.

### Ask if it is safe to drink alcohol while taking medicine.

- Alcohol may change the way the medicine works in your body.

*If you have questions about medicines, call your*

Doctor: .....

Pharmacist: .....

Poison Control Center: **1-800-222-1222**  
**1-212-POISONS**

**24 hours a day, 7 days a week**



## Learning about Your Medicine



NYC Poison Control Center  
NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene  
Bellevue Hospital Center  
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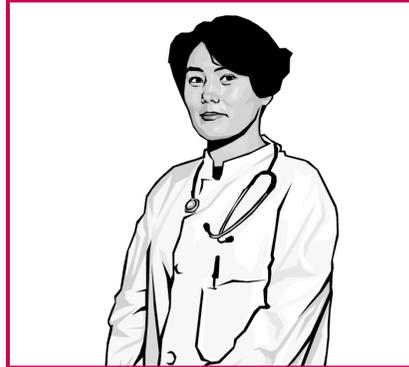
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## How can I learn about my new medicine?

- There are three easy ways.

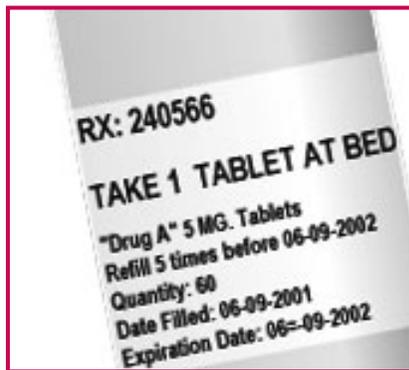
1. Ask your doctor.



2. Ask your pharmacist.



3. Read the label.



## What should I ask before I start a new medicine?

- Ask your doctor or pharmacist these questions:

### ***What is the name of my medicine?***

Some medicines have two names.  
One is a brand name. The other is a generic name.

### ***What is my medicine for?***

Ask if your medicine will:

- help with your symptoms
- prevent an illness
- cure your illness

### ***How do I take my medicine?***

Ask:

- when to take it
- how much to take
- how long to take it
- if you take it with food or by itself

### ***What side effects could I have?***

Ask what to expect.

Common side effects are:

- headache
- upset stomach

### ***What should I do if I miss a dose of my medicine?***

Call your doctor or pharmacist if you miss a dose.

Ask what to do.

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## Medicine Safety



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## How do I take my medicine safely?

- Be sure you take the right amount. Ask your doctor if you are not sure. Keep track of when you take it.
- If you are taking antibiotics be sure to take them all. Do not stop just because you feel better.
- Do not share your medicine. It may not be right for someone else.
- Check the expiration date. Do not save old medicine.
- Call your doctor and pharmacist if you have a bad reaction to the medicine.
- Tell your doctor and pharmacist what other medicines you are taking. Some medicines do not work well with others.



A patient tells his doctor what medicines he is taking.

## How can I give medicine to my child safely?

- Make sure the medicine is safe for children.
- Do not call medicine "candy".
- Use a measuring spoon or dropper made just for children's medicine.
- Tell the doctor and pharmacist if the child is taking other medicines. Some medicines do not work well together.

### Safety Tips for Medicine

Make sure you can see clearly. You do not want to make a mistake with medicines.

**Wear your glasses.**  
**Keep the lights on.**



Keep medicines away from your children.

**Use child-resistant caps.**  
**Keep medicine in a locked cabinet.**



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## Your Prescription Medicine



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## What is prescription medicine?

- It is medicine prescribed just for you by a licensed health care provider.
  - doctor
  - nurse practitioner
  - physician assistant
  - dentist
- It is available at drug stores.

### Q & A

**Q:** What if I have questions about my medicine at night, on holidays or weekends?

**A:** Call the **Poison Control Center**.

A pharmacist or nurse is always there.

The advice is free.

Call

**1-800-222-1222**

or

**1-212-POISONS**  
**(1-212-764-7667)**



## How much prescription medicine do I take?

- Ask your doctor or pharmacist. Also read the label.
 

You should know:

  - how much medicine to take
  - how often to take it
  - when to take it
  - how many refills you can get

**Rx: 240566**

**TAKE 1 TABLET AT BEDTIME**

“Drug A” 5 MG Tablets  
Refill 5 times before 06-09-2002  
Quantity: 60

A sample of directions on a prescription label

## What else do I need to know about my medicine?

- Look for a sticker added to the bottle. It may tell you:
  - directions for taking your medicine
  - warnings about side effects
  - storage instructions

Refill 5 times before 06-09-2002  
Quantity: 60  
Date Filled: 06-09-2001  
Expiration Date: 06-09-2002



A sample of directions on a pharmacist sticker

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- Write down any allergies you have.

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- Some medicines may harm your baby.

### Ask if it is safe to drink alcohol while taking medicine.

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# Your

# Over-The-Counter Medicine



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## What is over-the-counter (OTC) medicine?

- It is medicine you can get without a prescription.
- It is available at drug stores and supermarkets.



Some over-the-counter medicines

## How do I choose an OTC medicine?

- Ask your pharmacist or doctor.
  - Tell them your symptoms. Ask what medicine to use.
  - Let them know if you do not feel better soon.
- Read the labels.
  - List your symptoms.
  - Match them with symptoms on the labels.

## How do I know how much medicine to take?

- Read the label. It will tell you:
  - how often to take it
  - when to take it
  - if it is for adults only

<b>Directions</b> adults and children 12 years and over	take 2 tablets every 4 to 6 hours; not more than 12 tablets in 24 hours
children 6 years to under 12 years	take 1 tablet every 4 to 6 hours; not more than 6 tablets in 24 hours

## How do I know if the medicine is safe for me?

- Read the warnings on the label. They may tell you:
  - who should not take it because of medical problems
  - when to call the doctor
  - side effects you may have
  - what things you should not do (such as driving)
  - who to call in case you take too much medicine

<b>Warnings</b> Ask a doctor before use if you have <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• glaucoma</li> <li>• a breathing problem such as emphysema or chronic bronchitis</li> <li>• trouble urinating due to an enlarged prostate gland</li> </ul>
Ask a doctor or pharmacist before use if you are taking other medicine.
Keep out of reach of children.

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## Vitamins, Herbals, and Minerals



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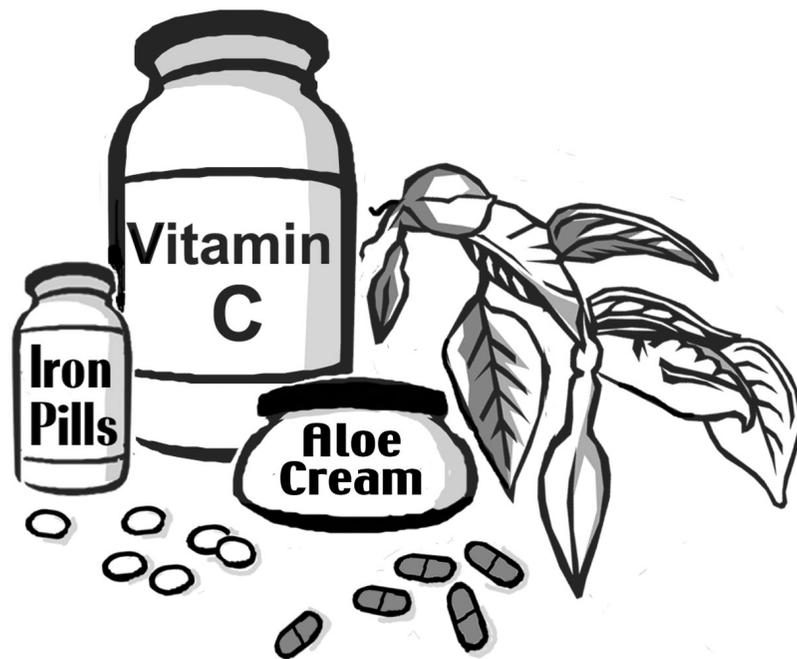


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### What are vitamins, herbals and minerals?

- Vitamins and herbals are found naturally in most foods.
- Herbals have active ingredients taken from plants.
- They are available OTC without a prescription.
- You can buy them at health food stores, drug stores or supermarkets.



Some vitamins, herbals and minerals

### How do I know if vitamins, herbals, and minerals are safe?

- Ask your doctor or pharmacist.
  - Tell them your health concern.

Ask if the vitamin, herbal or mineral will help it.

  - Tell them what other medicines you take.

Some medicines do not work well together.

### How do I take my vitamin, herbal, or mineral?

- Ask your doctor or pharmacist:
  - how much to take
  - when to take it
  - side effects you may have
  - if you need to take it with food or by itself

#### *Examples of vitamins, herbals and minerals:*

- Vitamin C (vitamin)
- St. John's Wort (herbal)
- Ginseng (herbal)
- Iron (mineral)

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## Your Medical Appointment



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**How do I get ready for my medical appointment?**

- Write down your symptoms.
- Write down any medicines you are taking.
- Write down the questions you want to ask.
- Take this information with you.

**Some Questions You May Be Asked**  
(Write down the answers.)

What are your past illnesses?

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What are the health problems in your family?

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What operations have you had?

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Do you have any allergies?

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**What do I do at my appointment?**

- Tell the doctor or nurse why you are there.
- Tell them about your symptoms.
- Tell them what medicines you take.
- Ask questions if you do not understand.

**What do I do if the doctor wants to see me again?**

- Set up your next visit before you leave the office.
- Ask for an appointment card.
- Keep the card where you will see it often.
- Write your next visit on a calendar.

Your next appointment is on	
<b>Monday 6/10/02</b>	
at <b>3:00 PM</b>	
Dr. Smith 32 Main St. New York, NY 12345	<b>Bring x-rays</b> 212.333.5555

A sample of an appointment card