

MY MEDICATIONS: MEDICATION SAFETY

Nearly a quarter of people age 65 to 69 take at least five prescription medications for chronic conditions, and that number rises as you age, according to the *Journals of Gerontology*. With so many medications, it's bound to be confusing. Here are some tips to help you safely manage your medications and avoid mix-ups:

- You should know the name of each medication you take, the dosage, why your doctor prescribed it, and when and how often you should take it. Your pharmacist can give you a printed list.
- Each medication you get should come with an informational handout. Keep these, plus any inserts that come with the medication, in the back pocket of this Binder. These handouts provide details about dosage, how to take the medication, and any possible side effects — and what to do if you experience them.
- To keep track of your medications each day, use a pill container with compartments, a calendar or a smartphone app. You can set reminders on your phone or your watch to help you remember to take meds on time.
- Make a note on your calendar about when you will need refills, and check your medication supply once a week to make sure you have enough on hand. It's important to take your medications as instructed by your doctor.
- At every doctor visit, review your list of medications and make sure that prescriptions are current and have the correct number of refills available.
- If you start having an unwanted side effect, tell your physician to see if he or she can change the medication or dosage for you.
- Make sure you tell your physician about any over-the-counter medications or supplements you take to help avoid dangerous interactions.
- When you travel, take extra medication with you in case you get delayed. If you are traveling in an airplane, always carry them on with you; do not place them in checked baggage.

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Fill in the form with the following information about each medication you are taking, including over-the-counter drugs and supplements. You'll find extra forms in your packet.

- Name and strength of the medication
- Physician who prescribed it
- Dosage, including how many times a day and the specific time. Also, note if it should be taken with food.
- Shape, color and any identifying characteristics (to help avoid medication mix-ups)
- Purpose/reason for taking it
- When you first started taking it
- Any side effects you've experienced
- Any potential food or drug interactions you should be aware of
- When a refill is needed

Medication name	Prescribing physician	Dose/ time/ with food?	Shape and color	Purpose	When started	Side effects	Interactions	Refill by