

How Do I Manage My Medicines?

You play a key role in developing your medication treatment plan. It's important to work closely with your health care providers. These could include your doctor, nurse and pharmacist.

If taking medicine is new to you, there may be a lot to remember. You may have questions for your health care provider. For example, why are you taking it? What time should you take it? How often do you take it, and how many pills should you take? Can you take them with food? What are the possible side effects?

It's very important to take medicine exactly as directed. If medicine isn't taken the right way, it may not work properly. It also could cause side effects or you could counteract one medicine by taking it with another.



How can I remember to take my medicine?

- Take it at the same time each day along with other daily events like brushing your teeth.
- Use a weekly pill box with sections for each day or time of day. Some are computerized and can alert you when it's time for a dose or to order refills.
- Use an app designed to remind you when to take your medications. Many will also remind you to order refills.
 Or simply use your smartphone calendar and alarm.
- · Ask family and friends to remind you.
- · Make a medication calendar or chart.
- · Leave notes to remind yourself.
- Wear a wristwatch with an alarm.

What else should I know?

- Store your medicine the way your doctor or pharmacist tells you. Keep it in the original container or label new containers.
- Keep track of what pills can and can't be taken together.
 This includes over-the-counter medicines.

- Always get your prescription filled on time, so you don't run out.
- Try to see the same pharmacist each time.
- Don't take more of your medicine than the prescribed dose.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist before taking a new overthe-counter medicine. For example, antihistamines, "cold tablets" or vitamin supplements may interfere with your prescribed medicine.
- Always check with your doctor before you stop taking a medicine.
- If you have any questions about your medications, call your doctor or pharmacist.
- Tell your health care provider and pharmacist if you are having any side effects.
- Write down the names and doses of medicines you are taking. If you go to more than one doctor, take your updated medication list with you to each visit.
- Keep all medicines out of the reach of children and pets.
- Take a few extra days of medication with you when you travel so you won't run out if you're delayed.
- Keep your medication in your carry-on bag when flying.

(continued)





My medicines - Ask your health care providers to help you complete the chart below.

NAME OF MEDICINE	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE	WHAT MY DOSAGE IS	WHAT IT'S FOR	WHEN TO TAKE IT	NAME OF DOCTOR

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

- 1 Call 1-800-AHA-USA1 (1-800-242-8721), or visit heart.org to learn more about heart disease and stroke.
- 2 Sign up for our monthly Heart Insight e-news for heart patients and their families, at HeartInsight.org.
- 3 Connect with others sharing similar journeys with heart disease and stroke by joining our Support Network at heart.org/SupportNetwork.

Do you have questions for your doctor or nurse?

Take a few minutes to write down your questions for the next time you see your health care provider.

For example:

How long should I take my medicine?

What if I forget to take a medicine?

MY QUESTIONS:

We have many other fact sheets to help you make healthier choices to reduce your risk, manage your condition or care for a loved one. Visit **heart.org/AnswersByHeart** to learn more.