

Safety First

12 Medication Safety Tips

1. Make a Medication List

Know the medications you are currently taking including the drug name, dose, how often to take, and the purpose for taking the medication. Bringing an updated medication list to your doctor's office, hospital and pharmacy is helpful.

2. Have an Allergy/Reaction List

It is important to be aware of your personal medication allergies and intolerances. Adding these to your medication list will provide healthcare professionals with the information they need when beginning new therapies. Write the medication and the specific reaction on a list, for example "Amoxicillin gives me a rash."

3. Ask Questions

Healthcare providers are there to help you! Do not be afraid to ask questions and do not leave until you feel comfortable with the answers you receive.

4. Be Educated

Read the information the pharmacist provides you and be knowledgeable about your medication.

5. Watch Drug Interactions

It is important to know if any of the medications you are on have any drug or diet interactions. Certain drugs may require a diet adjustment or monitoring. For example, if you are on warfarin then your Vitamin K intake should be monitored.

6. Find a Helpful Pharmacy

Choose a pharmacy where the pharmacist is willing to take time to talk with you and answer all of your questions. Once you find a pharmacy you like, get all of your medications filled there.

7. Safely Store Medications

Make sure you store your medications in a safe place and out of children's reach.

8. Verify Medications

Before taking medications, look at them to make sure you are taking the correct one.

9. Participate in Your Own Safety

While in the hospital offer your armband to the nurses to verify your identification. Speak up if someone doesn't sanitize their hands. Ask questions and don't hesitate to ask for help.

10. Let the Hospital Administer the Medications

While in the hospital do not ask to take your own medications. This bypasses many of the safety nets.

11. Verify your Name and Date of Birth at the Pharmacy

Before leaving the pharmacy with your Prescriptions, make sure they verify your name and another identifier (date of birth or address).

12. Don't Rush Your Pharmacy

Do not define how good a pharmacy is by how fast they are. Never rush the pharmacist, they are checking to make sure the medications are safe for you to take.