

CHOLESTEROL GUIDE: HOW TO TAKE YOUR MEDICINE

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Tips for taking your medicine

Other tips for remembering your medicines



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Cholesterol Guide: How To Take Your Medicine

When you are taking medicines, it is important to follow your healthcare provider's advice carefully. If you do not take medicines exactly as prescribed, they can harm you. For example, you could unknowingly counteract one medicine by taking it with another one. Medicines can make you feel sick or dizzy if not taken properly.

Tips for taking your medicine

- Take all medicines as advised by your healthcare provider.
- Take your medicines as scheduled, at the same time every day. Do not stop taking or change your medicines unless you first talk with your healthcare provider. Even if you feel good, continue to take your medicines. Stopping your medicines suddenly can make your condition worse.
- Have a routine for taking your medicines. Get a pillbox that is marked with the days of the week. Fill the pillbox at the beginning of each week to make it easier for you to remember.
- Keep a medicine calendar and note every time you take a dose. Your prescription label tells you how much to take at each dose, but your health care provider might change your dosage periodically, depending on your response to the medicine. On your medicine calendar, you can list any changes in your medicine dosages as prescribed by your healthcare provider.
- Do not decrease your medicine dosage to save money. You must take the full amount to get the full benefits. Talk with your healthcare provider about ways you can reduce the costs of your medicines
- Do not take any over-the-counter drugs or herbal therapies unless you ask your healthcare provider first.
- If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember. However, if it is almost time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your regular dosing schedule. Do not take two doses to make up for the dose you missed.
- Regularly fill your prescriptions and ask your pharmacist any questions you have about refilling your prescription. Do not wait until you are completely out of medicine before filling your prescriptions. Let your healthcare provider know if you have trouble getting to the pharmacy, have financial concerns, or have other problems that make it difficult for you to get your medicines.
- When traveling, keep your medicines with you so you can take them as scheduled. On longer trips, take an extra week's supply of medicines and

copies of your prescriptions, in case you need to get a refill.

- Inform your health care provider of any new health concerns, and specifically, kidney or liver issues as your medication and/or dose may need to be adjusted.
- Inform your health care provider of any medication dose changes or new medicines, both prescription & over-the-counter, as the dose of your cholesterol medicine may need to be adjusted.
- Before having surgery with a general anesthetic, including dental surgery, tell your healthcare provider what medicines you are taking.
- Limit alcohol & grapefruit/grapefruit juice as either can change the medication strength or increase the risk for side effects.
- Understand your medicine. Know what it's for, and how and when you're supposed to take it.
- Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist about adjustments if your medicine routine is too complicated.
- If your medicines are too expensive, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist about finding financial assistance.
- If you have trouble understanding your health care provider or pharmacist, ask a friend or loved one to go with you and help you.
- If you don't feel like your medicine is making a difference, speak with your healthcare provider.

Other tips for remembering your medicines

- Make an instruction sheet for yourself by taping a sample of each pill you have to take on a sheet of paper and writing down all the information about that pill to remind you.
- Use special day-of-the-week divided pillboxes that help you keep track of medicines.
- Ask people close to you to help remind you.
- Keep a medicine chart near your medicine, and make a note every time you take your dose.
- Ask your pharmacist to help you develop a coding system for your medicines that make them easier to take.
- Get some colored labels and place them on your medicine bottles to simplify your routine. For example, blue can be for morning, red for afternoon and yellow for bedtime.
- Many types of pill containers are available. Timer caps can be purchased for pill bottles to remind you of the proper time to take medicine. Ask your pharmacist about which containers or reminder aids might be right for you.

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