

# Taking Medications Safely— 7 Things to Check Before You Leave the Pharmacy



Did you know that your pharmacist can work with you to help you take medications safely and reliably? Here are a few things to check when you fill a prescription, especially for a new medication:

- Make sure the label has your name on it and the directions from your doctor. If it doesn't have directions, talk with the pharmacist before taking the medicine.
- If the medicine is something you've taken before, see if it looks the same. If the medicine looks different from what you were expecting, ask the pharmacist to double check that it is correct.
- If you have trouble swallowing pills, ask if a liquid medicine is available. Do not chew, break, or crush pills until you find out whether the drug will still work.
- Make sure you can read and understand the medicine's name, directions, and any warning stickers on the bottle. If the label is hard to read, ask the pharmacist to use a larger type.
- Make sure you can open the container. If not, and you don't have children in the house, ask for medicine bottles that are easier to open.
- Ask if the medicine needs to be stored in a particular way, such as in a refrigerator or a dry area.
- Give your doctor and pharmacist an up-to-date list of any allergies and other medications you're taking so they won't give you a medicine that contains something you're allergic to. You can check the label, too, to make sure you're not allergic to any of the ingredients.

If you have any questions about a medication you are taking or any of the written information that comes with your prescription, talk with the pharmacist or your doctor. Making sure you understand your medications is an important step in taking care of your health.

[Read more](#) about taking medications safely on our website.