

Questions to Ask About Medications

Getting information you want to know

Below are examples of questions to ask if a doctor recommends or prescribes a medication for you. Check off questions you want to ask your doctor. Add other questions you want to discuss. You may want to share a copy of this with your provider.

Take this list with you to your next appointment. You may want to give a copy to your doctor. Listen carefully and keep a record of what you find out. Take notes or bring a friend to take notes for you. Using a tape recorder will allow you to listen to the answers again later. If something is unclear to you, or if you want more information, do not be afraid to ask. Your doctor may not be able to answer every question, but can help you find the answers.

About this Medication

- What is the full name of this medication?
How do you spell it?
- Is there a generic name for this medication?
How do you spell it?
- Do you have printed information about this medication I can have?
- What does this medication do? How will it help me?
- Why are you recommending this medication to me?
- How will I know if it is working for me?
How long will it take?
- Will I need blood tests or other regular check-ups if I use this medication?
- Could I become addicted or dependent on this medication?
- How do I know if the dose should be changed or the medication stopped?

About Options

- Are there different ways to take this medication such as pills, shots, or patches?
Should I consider these?
- What other medication might be helpful to me?
Why are you not recommending them for me at this time?

About Dosage

- What is the exact dose you are recommending?
- How often and when should I take this medication?
- What happens if I forget to take a dose at the right time?

About Side Effects

- What are the risks of using this medication?
- What are the side effects of this medication?
- If I experience side effects, what should I do?
- What are some of the ways to manage these side effects?

Mixing This Medication With Other Drugs

- Are there any restrictions if I take this medication (such as avoid certain foods or not drive)?
- What happens if I drink alcohol while using this medication?
- What happens if I use marijuana or other street drugs while using this medication?
- I use these medications, vitamins, and supplements. Is mixing a problem with any of them?
- Other prescribed medications:
- Over the counter medications:
- Supplements, vitamins, roots, and herbs:

About Cost (If the doctor does not know about costs, ask who does)

- How much does the medication cost?
- How much am I responsible to pay?
- Where can I get help to pay for these medications?

Special Considerations: How do these affect my using this medication?

- I want to get pregnant.
- I need to concentrate for work.
- I have diabetes (or a family history of diabetes).
- I have heart problems (or a family history of heart problems).
- I have high blood pressure (high blood).
- I have young children at home.
- I want to lose weight.
- I have trouble sleeping.
- I smoke cigarettes.
- I get dizzy or lose my balance.
- I feel stiffness or shakes in my muscles.



- If you do not understand, ask questions until you do understand.
- Ask your doctor to write down his or her instructions for you.
- Ask your doctor for printed information about the medication, its risks, and side effects.
- Ask where you can get more information.
- Nurses, pharmacists, and other health care providers can be a good source of information. Talk to them about your questions, too.

More Questions I Want To Ask:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

For more information:

U.S. Food and Drug Administration: <http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers>
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality: <http://www.ahrq.gov/consumer>
Medline Plus: <http://medlineplus.gov>