

Questions Every Patient Should Ask Before Taking Medications

- What is the name of the medicine my doctor (or other health care practitioner) ordered for me?
- What are the brand name and generic name of this medicine? Can I take a generic version of this medicine?
- What does the medicine look like?
- What am I taking this medicine for? What is it supposed to do?
- Does this new prescription mean I should stop taking any other medicines I am taking now? Is this new medicine safe to take with my other medicines, including over-the-counter medicines and dietary supplements?
- How do I take the medicine and how often do I take it? If I need to take it three times a day, does that mean to take it at breakfast, lunch, and dinner, or to take it every 8 hours? What do I do if I miss a dose?
- How long will I be taking it? When should I expect the medicine to start working?
- How can I tell if it is working? Do I need to take it all, or should I stop when I feel better?
- Can I get a refill? How often can I get a refill?
- Are there foods, drinks (including alcoholic beverages), other medicines, or activities to avoid while I am taking this medicine?
- Are there any tests I need to take while I am on this medicine?
- What are the side effects that can happen with this medicine? What do I do if they occur? When should I tell the doctor about a problem or side effect?
- How should I store this medicine?
- What printed information can you give me about this medicine? (Is it available in large print or a language other than English?)