

Elder Tips:
Home Medication Use
...Offered as a Courtesy by Maryhill Manor of Niagara

As we get older, many times we end up with a problem or two that require us to see a physician. It could be because of an acute illness or a long term condition which needs follow up. The physician often will prescribe medications to treat the problem and we need to take those medications properly to improve our health or cure the condition.

Here are a few tips to follow when taking medications at home.

1. **Keep a CURRENT list of all your medications** in a place where they are easily found such as on your refrigerator.
2. **Write your medications down in PENCIL** so you can make changes if your medications change. Include any over the counter medications, vitamins, and herbal preparations you take regularly. Include the dose and times you take your pills.
3. **Take your list of medications with you** when you visit your physician so they will know what you are taking.
4. **Always take the medications as ordered by your physician.** For example, even if you feel better take the full treatment of antibiotics. Don't "save them" for later. The dose and amount is needed to treat whatever infection you have.
5. **If medications are ordered [with meals]** then take them with food. You can take them ½ hour before you eat up to 1 hour after your meal. **If medications are ordered [on an empty stomach]** then take them 2 hours after your meal.
6. **If you find it difficult to swallow pills,** tell your physician. Many medications are available in liquid form.
7. **Store your medications** in a cool, dry area out of the sunlight.
8. **Tell your physician and pharmacist about ANY ALLERGIES you have** and what reaction you had. (Such as hives, rashes, difficult breathing or swallowing).
9. **Tell your physician and pharmacist about any over the counter medications you take.** Even tylenol, vitamins, or dietary supplements can affect other medicines.
10. **Try using a pill box to set up your medications** so you can easily take the proper medication at the proper time. There are many available on the market to meet your needs.

Ask questions about your medications. Your physician or pharmacist are happy to help you understand what the medication is and why you need to take it. You need to be informed about your health and the treatment you receive.

Elder Tips are offered as a courtesy by:

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