



1 Make a list

2 Follow the List

3 Share and Update the List

Step 1 | Make the List

When making a list of all your medications, be sure to include:

- Prescription medications from all health-care providers
- All over-the-counter products that don't require a prescription, including dietary supplements, vitamins, herb and other natural products
- Don't forget to include prescription and over-the-counter lotions, creams, solutions, drops, gels, inhalers, injections – these are all medications

Also be sure to note:

- The names of the medications
- The amount you take or use (dose or strength and number of tablets, capsules, drops, inhalations, or units)
- Why you take them (what they're for)
- When you take them (frequency of dose)

Step 2 | Follow the list

Routine is important when following the list! Develop a system that works best for you to help you remember to take your medication. Your system may include:

- Daily or weekly pillboxes
- A written chart of your medications you can fill in or mark off when you take them
- Alarm or cell-phone reminders
- Changing the position of the medication's bottle after taking it (for example, turning the label towards the wall in the morning and towards you in the evening)

Step 3 | Share and Update the list

Be sure to bring your list to all medical appointments. It's important to update the list whenever there is a change. Keep your updated list of medications handy (for example, in your purse or wallet) in case you go to the hospital or another emergency health-care provider.

DO NOT assume that the computer medication list at your doctor's office is correct or complete.

Additional Tips:

- Use one pharmacy, if possible, so that all records are in one place and accessible
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist if your medications can be simplified in any way
- Discard old, expired or discontinued medications – see: [How to discard medications?](https://www.fda.gov/forconsumers/consumerupdates/ucm101653.htm) (<https://www.fda.gov/forconsumers/consumerupdates/ucm101653.htm>)
- Keep medications in their original container (except if you're putting them in a pillbox as part of your system or routine). Do not pour new medications into old bottles.
- Do not use medications from other people or give others your medications
- Keep medications in safe location away from children and pets
- Take medications as prescribed – this will help you avoid unintended or potentially dangerous side effects or interactions. For example, some medications can be dangerous if cut or crushed, some should be taken with food, some must be taken at certain times of day, etc.
- Know the side effects of your medications and speak up if you think you're having them
- Prescription labels are small – be sure to ask for larger print handouts and labels if you would like them, or use magnifying glasses to help you read the labels
- Ask for easy to remove lids if you would like them