



# Make *Yours* Healthy Choices!

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## Becoming a Better Consumer of Prescription Drugs

With the rising cost of prescription drugs, it is more important than ever that all of us are better consumers of health care. Prescription drugs currently account for approximately 20% of all health care costs and there are some things you can do to become a better consumer of prescription drugs.

### HERE ARE SOME EASY TIPS FOR YOU TO FOLLOW:

- Be sure you always know the names of the prescription drugs you are taking, the reason for taking the drugs, the drugs' side effects, and any possible drug interactions.
- Keep a list of all prescription drugs you are taking and give this list to any new physician you see.
- Review your drug regimen with your Primary Care Physician at least once a year.
- Review your drug regimen with your pharmacist to assure that potential drug interactions are identified before they occur.
- Before adding an over the counter drug to your drug regimen, be sure you read the label for potential drug interactions. Consult with your pharmacist or physician.

### QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE TAKING MEDICINE:

- What are the brand name and generic name of this medication?
- Can I take a generic version of this medicine?
- What am I taking this medicine for?

- Does this new prescription mean I should stop taking any other medicines I am taking now?
- 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?
- Do I need to take all of the medication, or should I stop when I feel better?
- How long will I be taking it? Can I get a refill? How often can I get a refill?
- Are there any tests I need to take while I'm on this medicine?
- When should I expect the medicine to start working? How can I tell if it's working?
- When should I tell the doctor about a problem or side effect?
- Are there foods, drinks (including alcoholic beverages), other medicines, or activities to avoid while I'm taking this medicine?
- What are the side effects that can happen with this medicine?
- What should I do if I have a side effect?
- What happens if I miss a dose?
- What printed information can you give me about this medicine?

### HOW CAN YOU SAVE MONEY?

- Shop different pharmacies for the best drug prices. Not all drug stores sell the same drug for the same price.
- If you have never taken a drug before, only one half of the prescription should be filled. You will avoid purchasing drugs you may not be able to use should you have an adverse reaction to the drug.

- Use generic drugs whenever possible. You can save up to 50% of the cost of the brand name drug and obtain the exact same benefits!
- For maintenance drugs, use the mail order drug program available through your employer's health care plan. The drugs will be sent directly to your home. It's convenient, affordable and easy!
- When you have been prescribed a new prescription drug, ask your physician for a sample! Drug companies routinely give physicians many samples of drugs and your physician can easily pass those samples on to you.

### THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- All drugs have expiration dates past which the drug loses its' effectiveness.
- When traveling, keep prescription drugs with you versus in your suitcase in case your luggage is lost.
- Always keep medication out of the reach of children and animals.
- Clean out your medicine cabinet once a year and discard all old and expired drugs.

**Be a Wise  
Health Care Consumer!**



*Note: This information is meant to complement the advice of your health care providers, not to replace it. Talk to your doctor if you have any health care concerns.*