



# New Medication

## Questions You Should Ask Your Doctor

live well, work well

**Be sure to ask your healthcare provider about all new medications prescribed to you to ensure you understand how to correctly take and store your new medications. This can help you avoid harmful side effects and interactions.**

### Questions to Ask

**1. What is this medicine for and what effect should I expect?** It is important to know what medications you are taking, why you are taking them and what the intended outcome is.

**2. What are the brand and generic names of this medication? Can I use a generic?** Generic and brand name drugs are therapeutically alike in dosage, safety, strength, quality, intended use, the way it works, and the way it should be taken. Generic drugs are often less expensive than their brand name counterparts.

**3. Does this medication replace any of the medications I have been taking?** Ask if you should continue to or stop taking previously prescribed medications.

**4. How and when will I use this medication, what amount will I use and for how long?** These are basic things you need to know when taking a new medication. Asking while still in the doctor's office allows you to immediately clarify anything you do not understand.

**5. What do I do if I miss a dose?** In some situations missing a dose could be life threatening. Make sure you know what to do in this situation.

**6. Should I avoid any other medicine (prescription or over-the-counter), dietary supplements, beverages, foods or activities while using this medication?** All of these things can affect the way a medication works in your body or contribute to potential side effects.

**7. Will I need to have any testing to monitor this drug's effects?** Some medications have to be monitored to ensure they are working properly.

**8. What are the possible side effects of this medication? What do I do if a side effect occurs?** Medications can have rare but serious side effects; make sure you know what to do in this situation.

**9. How and where do I store this medication?** Some medications need to be stored in the refrigerator, or away from light and moisture. Be sure you know where and how you should be storing your medication.

### Helpful Websites

#### Treatment Options

National Guideline Clearing House  
<http://www.guideline.gov>

#### Diseases

National Institutes of Health-  
Information Phone Lines  
[www.nih.gov/health/infoline.htm](http://www.nih.gov/health/infoline.htm)

#### Drug Interaction Checker

<http://www.drugdigest.org>

#### Medication Information

U.S. Food and Drug Administration  
<http://www.fda.gov/cder/index.html>

## For more information...

Visit the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality online at [www.ahrq.gov](http://www.ahrq.gov). Click on the consumers and patients heading. This website, created by the U.S. Government, provides helpful information and links for becoming a more active healthcare consumer.