



Heartland Kidney
Network

We're Here For You.

MY TREATMENT: MEDICATION SAFETY

Medication errors are very common and can cause death. Knowing what your medications are, why you are taking them, when to take them, and what to expect, are some of the keys to effective medication use. Errors can be prevented.

- Keep a medication list of all the prescription and over-the-counter medications you take. Over-the-counter products include many different substances such as vitamins and minerals, herbal and dietary supplements, laxatives, cold medicines, and antacids.
- For each medicine, mark the amount you take, the time of day you take it, and whether it should be taken with food.
- Store two copies of the list: one on the refrigerator door or where your medications are stored, and one in your wallet or purse.
- Review your medicine record with your dialysis staff monthly, at every visit to the doctor, and whenever your doctor prescribes new medicine.

KNOW YOUR MEDICATIONS

If your doctor prescribes new medication, ask the following questions:

About the medication:

- What is the name of the medicine and why am I taking it?
- What is the name of the condition this medicine will treat?
- How long will it take to work?
- How should I store the medications? Does it need to be refrigerated?
- Can the pharmacist substitute a less expensive, generic form of the medicine?

How to take medication:

- When should I take it? As needed or on schedule? Before, with, or between meals? At bedtime?
- How often should I take it?
- How long will I have to take it?



What to expect:

- How will I feel once I start taking this medicine?
- How will I know if this medicine is working?
- If I forget to take it, what should I do?
- What side effects might I expect? Should I report them?
- Can this medicine interact with other prescription and over-the-counter medicines – including herbal and dietary supplements – which I am taking now?

TIPS FOR TAKING MEDICATION

- Check the label on your medicine before taking it to make sure that it is for the correct person – you.
- Read and save any written information that comes with the medicine.
- Take the medicine according to the schedule on the label.
- Don't take more or less than the prescribed amount of any medicine.

For more information or to file a grievance please contact the Heartland Kidney Network at: Heartland Kidney Network • 7306 NW Tiffany Springs Pkwy. • Suite 230 • Kansas City, MO 64153
Toll-Free Patient Line: (800) 444-9965 • net12@nw12.esrd.net • www.heartlandkidney.org

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- If swallowing tablets is difficult, ask your doctor or pharmacist whether there is a liquid form of the medicine, or whether you could crush your tablets. However, do NOT break, crush, or chew tablets without asking a health professional first. NEVER break, crush, or chew a capsule.
- Get into the habit of checking the expiration dates on your medicine bottles and throw away medicine that has expired.
- Try to set and follow a routine for taking your medicines.

MANAGING YOUR MEDICINES

- Don't stop taking a prescription drug unless your doctor says its okay – even if you are feeling better.
- Get prescriptions refilled early enough so you won't run out of medicines. Running out could cause problems with your medicine schedule. Check expiration dates frequently and discard any medicines that are out-of-date.
- Keep all medicines out of the sight and reach of children and away from pets. If children do visit your house, be extra cautious and write down the phone number of the nearest poison control center.
- Because the pharmacist keeps your medication records, it is a very good idea to have the same drug store fill your prescriptions whenever possible.

MY QUESTIONS

Ask your Care Team: Do you have a current list of all my medications? Could I have a copy to keep? Are there medications that I should hold before dialysis? I do not understand why I'm taking certain (name) medication. Are any of my meds with or without food? Does it matter what time I take my medications?

Source: <http://nihseniorhealth.gov/takingmedicines/takingmedicinessafely/01.html>