

*General Guidelines
for Medication Use (cont'd)*

- Take medications on a routine schedule. Depending upon your prescription, you might take your medications in connection with such daily events as breakfast or brushing your teeth. For additional assistance, ask your pharmacist about devices that can help you remember your medication schedule.
- Never share medication or take someone else's medication.
- If you are taking certain medications, such as steroids or antibiotics, it is especially important to complete the course of therapy and take the full number of doses as prescribed by your health care provider.
- Keep all medications in their original containers, and do not keep different pills in the same container.
- Plan ahead for trips and be prepared for travel delays. Take enough medication with you.
- Do not take medication in the dark.
- Do not expose your medications to the sunlight, extreme temperatures or moisture. Keep lids tightly secured.
- Keep all medications out of the reach of children.

Safe Medication Use

A Guide for Patients & Family Members

In the event of accidental ingestion or overdose of medication, call:

Mid-Plains Poison Control Center

In Omaha: (402) 390-5555

In Nebraska and surrounding states: (800) 955-9119

If you have any questions about medications you are currently taking, ask your health care provider or visit the Methodist Health System Web site at www.bestcare.org.



Today's medications have great power to speed healing and improve our quality of life, but they can cause serious harm if not taken correctly.

Methodist Hospital constantly reviews how we provide medications to our patients. An expert, multidisciplinary team of health care professionals directs our comprehensive and systematic approach to safe medication use.

In addition, Methodist Hospital has placed pharmacists in patient care areas to assist staff with medication-related issues and ensure that medication orders are safe for the patient. The pharmacist's multifaceted role includes checking the completeness of the medication order, assessing appropriate dosing for each patient and preventing negative side effects or allergic reactions.

As a patient of Methodist Hospital or a family member of a patient, you are an integral part of our health care team in providing safe medication use.

Know Your Medications

You should be familiar with the name, appearance, dose, purpose and possible side effects of any medication you take on a routine basis. This information is extremely important when you are admitted to the hospital.

- **Always carry an up-to-date list of your medications and dosages, including all prescription and over-the-counter drugs, vitamins and herbal products.**
- Know what your medications look like.
- Know both the brand name and generic name of each medication.

- Know the dose of each medicine.
- Know how often, how long to take and how to take your medications (with food, or on an empty stomach, etc.).
- Ask your health care provider why you take each medication.
- Know the side effects of each medication and how to report side effects that might occur.
- Know your drug allergies and write them on your medication list.
- Know how to properly store your medications.
- Follow directions provided by your pharmacist or the manufacturer.

Safe Medication Use During Your Hospital Stay

We encourage patients and their family members to be active participants in ensuring safe medication use throughout the hospital stay.

- **Show your nurse a current list of your medications and dosages, including all prescription and over-the-counter drugs, vitamins and herbal products.**
- Check your patient wristband to make sure that all of your drug allergies are listed.
- Ask your health care provider and nurses about any new drug therapies you receive while in the hospital, using this brochure as a guide.
- Know what your medications look like, and immediately tell your nurse if a medication differs from your home medications or from those you have already received from the pharmacy on the hospital unit.
- Talk with your nurse or health care provider if you have any questions or suspect that you are experiencing negative effects from a drug that has been prescribed for you.

General Guidelines for Medication Use

- Always carry a current list of your medications and dosages, including all prescription and over-the-counter drugs, vitamins and herbal products.
- Share your medication list with your doctor, dentist and other health care providers during office visits and when you are admitted to the hospital, emergency room or urgent care center.
- Follow the directions on medication labels such as *take with food, take on an empty stomach*, etc.
- Check expiration dates on medications.
- Read any information sheets about your medication that you receive from your pharmacist or health care provider.
- If you have suppositories or medications with wrapping around them, remove the wrapping prior to use.
- Talk with your health care provider if you have any problems taking your medication, including difficulty with the size or coating of a pill.
- Do not increase or decrease the amount of your medication or stop taking it without checking with your health care provider.
- Report any side effects (diarrhea, rash, upset stomach, etc.) to your health care provider.

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