

## Questions to Ask Your Doctor About Any Medicine



Before taking any medicine, it's a good idea to learn as much as possible about the medicine and its effects on the body. It may be awkward at first, but a person should never be afraid to ask questions whenever a new drug is prescribed.

Elderly people often take more prescription medicines than young people. So, elderly people should be especially careful to tell their healthcare providers about all the medicines they are taking, including any over-the-counter medicines. They should also ask about drug interactions, even with remedies like aspirin, laxatives and cold remedies.

Of the 100 most frequently prescribed drugs, more than half contain at least one ingredient that reacts badly with alcohol. People who plan to drink while taking medicine, even wine with meals, should ask their healthcare provider about it first.

If you would like to learn more about the medicines you take, talk it over with your healthcare provider. Talking openly about your needs and concerns will help your healthcare provider prescribe the safest and most effective medication for you.

**Here are a few basic questions to ask your doctor the first time a medicine is prescribed.**

- ◆ What is the name of the medicine and what is it supposed to do?
- ◆ How and when should I take the medication?
- ◆ Should I take it with meals or on an empty stomach?
- ◆ How long should I continue to take the medication?
- ◆ Are there any foods or beverages I should avoid during the time I am on the medication?
- ◆ Are there any other medications I should not take with this new medication?
- ◆ Are there any limitations on driving vehicles or any other activities?
- ◆ What side effects may occur?
- ◆ Should side effects be reported, or should I do anything about them?
- ◆ If the symptoms of my illness do not improve, how long should I wait before reporting it?
- ◆ Can the prescription be refilled, or should I call again about getting a refill?