



IMPROVING HEALTH CARE, IMPROVING LIVES™

## 10 Steps for Success: Managing Your Medications

1. Know your medicines, including drug names, reasons for their use, potential side effects and how to take them safely.
2. Take your medicines exactly as directed. Read all of the labels and written instructions before taking each medicine. Ask your pharmacist or doctor if you don't understand the directions.
3. Continue taking all of your medicines until the doctor says to stop. Contact your provider if you experience side effects. If cost is an issue, ask about generic options or check available drug-assistance programs at <http://www.talkaboutrx.org/paps/jsp>.
4. Keep a current list of your medicines. This should include all prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) medicines, sample medicines, dietary supplements and herbal remedies.
5. Dispose of unused medicines properly. See <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/news/press07/022007.html>
6. Store medicines in a cool and dry place. That means keeping them away from the stove or direct sunlight and not using the medicine cabinet in the bathroom, which can be warm and damp.
7. Keep your medicines in one location (away from children and pets) unless any need to be refrigerated.
8. Use only one pharmacy, so your pharmacist can monitor your medications. Ask about possible interactions with OTC drugs or dietary/herbal supplements you use.
9. Ask your pharmacist or doctor before taking any over-the-counter (OTC) medicines, as some can be harmful in older adults.
10. Talk openly with your healthcare providers about the medicines and supplements you take. Review them together to identify potential risks, or to see if any can be reduced or stopped.
  - Do not share your medicines with other people, including family members.
  - Bring an up-to-date medicine list to all of your medical appointments.
  - Ask if there are simpler ways to take multiple medicines.

Source: MUST for Seniors™, [www.mustforseniors.org](http://www.mustforseniors.org)  
National Council on Patient Information and Education (NCPPIE) 2007.

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