

Handout 5: Ten important questions to help you be ‘medicine smart’

Here are 10 important questions from the National Council on Patient Information and Education to help you get the information you need to use medicines properly. Be sure to ask your doctor, physician’s assistant, nurse practitioner and pharmacist these questions whenever a medicine is prescribed for you.

1. What is the name of the medicine and what is it for? Is this the brand name or the generic name?
2. Is a generic version of this medicine available?
3. How and when do I take it – and for how long?
4. What foods, drinks, other medicines, dietary supplements or activities should I avoid while taking this medicine?
5. When should I expect the medicine to begin to work, and how will I know if it is working? Are there any tests required with this medicine (for example, to check liver or kidney function)?
6. Are there any side effects, what are they, and what do I do if they occur?
7. Will this medicine work safely with the other prescription and nonprescription medicines I am taking? Will it work safely with any dietary/herbal supplements I am taking?
8. Do I need to get a refill? When?
9. Do I need a new prescription to get a refill?
10. How should I store this medicine?

You may also want to ask: Is there information available about the medicine in large print, or a language other than English?

Brought to you by the National Council on Patient Information and Education

www.talkaboutrx.org ● **www.bemedwise.org** ● **www.mustforseniors.org**

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