

Medications

Sticking to a medication regimen is one of the most powerful ways to avoid diabetes complications.

Although it can be difficult, taking your daily medicines exactly as prescribed can help you stay healthy.

Questions you can ask about each medicine you take

1. What is the name of this medicine?
2. What is it for?
3. What time should I take it?
4. How much of it should I take each time?
5. How should I take it?
6. Should I take it with food?
7. How long should I take it?
8. What should I do if I miss a dose?
9. Are there any side effects?
10. What should I do if I have a side effect?
11. Is it safe to take this medicine with another medicine I am taking, including over-the-counter medicine, vitamins or herbals?
12. What food, drink or activities should I avoid while taking this medicine?



Ron Lach (photographer). Pills on a Table Digital image]. Retrieved from [//www.pexels.com/photo/pills-on-the-table-9902277](https://www.pexels.com/photo/pills-on-the-table-9902277)

Remembering to take medicines

You may find that you have been prescribed a number of medicines, and that you need to take them at different times of the day. The following tips and tools may help you to remember to take your medicines at the right time:

- ◆ Put your pill bottles or pillbox out in a place where you will see them (for example, on your bedside table, bathroom counter, or kitchen table).
- ◆ Make a wall chart with the names of your medicines, the dose, and the time of day you need to take them. Or, make a mark on a calendar when you have taken your medications.
- ◆ Buy a pillbox labelled with the days of the week and times of day. You can usually buy these from your pharmacy. Fill the box at the beginning of the week to help you keep track. Ask a family member or healthcare provider to check the box so that you know you are getting it right.
- ◆ Set an alarm on your watch or phone to remind you if a medicine has to be taken at a particular time. Ask someone to help you set the alarm if needed.
- ◆ Make family and friends aware of your medication schedule so they can remind you.
- ◆ Make a habit or routine out of taking your medicine to help you remember, for example take medications when you brush your teeth, or when you eat breakfast or dinner.
- ◆ Remember to take your medicines with you when you leave the house. You can ask someone in your house to remind you.
- ◆ Pack enough medicines with you when you are away on vacation- and always put them in your hand luggage.
- ◆ Reorder your prescriptions ahead of time to make sure that you never run out.



RODNAE productions (photographer). Pillbox. [Digital image]. Retrieved from www.pexels.com/photo/person-holding-white-tablet-8581415/

If all else fails, ask your healthcare provider if there are ways to simplify your medication regimen to make life easier. For example, if you take a medicine two or three times per day, your healthcare provider may be able to find a similar medicine that only needs to be taken once a day.

Side effects of medicines

If you experience side effects due to your medicines, contact your primary care team as soon as possible to talk about whether a change in your prescription may help you feel better.

If you feel that your medication is making you sick or causing you pain, call your primary care provider.

At your medical visits

- ◆ Always take an updated medications list; it will tell your provider about all of your medications including prescription medicines, over-the-counter medicines, and supplements.
- ◆ Take all medications before appointments, unless your healthcare provider specifically asks you not to.
- ◆ Tell your provider about any allergies or reactions you have had to medicines in the past.
- ◆ If you recently had medication changes, or if you were just discharged from the hospital, bring all your medication bottles to your next medical visit.
- ◆ Speak up! You should never be afraid to ask your healthcare provider, nurse or pharmacist about your medicines. Your health is too important.
- ◆ Talk with your provider before stopping any medications. Do not stop taking medicine because you feel better.

Medication costs

- ♦ Many people have difficulty affording the cost of medications. You can bring up this concern with your healthcare provider. There may be small changes they can make in your medication regimen that could help you save money.
- ♦ However, try not to skip medication doses. For a chronic condition like diabetes or high blood pressure where the symptoms are not obvious, skipping the drug may seem like no big deal. But when patients decide to stop taking a prescription or alter their doses without informing their healthcare providers, they may put themselves at risk of experiencing side effects or complications like a heart attack.
- ♦ Don't assume insurance offers the best price. Even if your health insurance covers your medication, your co-pay might not give you the lowest price. If you've been prescribed a generic, you may want to check chain stores, such as Target and Walmart for prices on your prescription. Their prices for many generics are often cheaper than the average health insurance co-pay – some as low as \$4.
- ♦ Split pills. If your medication comes in the form of scored pills, you might be able to save a lot of money by ordering a higher dose of pills that you can then split to the proper dosage. So, if your healthcare provider prescribes 20 milligrams of a particular medication, ask if he or she can prescribe the same drug in 40-milligram pills. In some cases, the larger milligram pills are cheaper. Once you split them, they become even more so.



Karolina Grabowska (photographer). Pills with Money [Digital image]. Retrieved from [//www.pexels.com/photo/set-of-pills-with-heap-of-paper-money-4386183/](http://www.pexels.com/photo/set-of-pills-with-heap-of-paper-money-4386183/)