

## What you need to know from your provider or pharmacist

Communication is a two-way street. You need to be informed about the medications being prescribed by your provider or given to you by a pharmacist.

*Be sure to ask:*

- What is the name of the medication?
- What is it used for?
- How often and for how long should it be taken? What should be done if a dose is missed?
- Are there foods or other medications that should not be taken with this medicine? What about alcohol consumption?
- What are the possible side effects? And which side effects should be reported to your doctor?

## Medication storage

It is important to follow the recommended storage guidelines for medication outlined by the manufacturer. Some medications need to be stored at room temperature and some need to be stored in the refrigerator. A medication's stability is important and improper storage can cause it to deteriorate. If the medication bottle does not specifically say how the medication should be stored, ask the pharmacist.

For information on any of our programs or services, please call 425.688.5259, or visit [overlakehospital.org](http://overlakehospital.org).



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## MEDICATION SAFETY



*Understand the risks and benefits of medication as well as information you and your provider need to know.*



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## **Medications play a big role in health care, helping people stay healthy and live longer, therefore it's important to know how to use them safely and effectively.**

### **Medication types**

Marked with 'Rx', *prescription medication* may only be used and purchased under a provider's supervision and with a written prescription.

*Over-the-counter (or 'OTC')* medications are those available without a prescription. They include aspirin, other pain medications like Tylenol® or Aleve®, cold preparations, antacids, vitamins and all herbal and dietary supplements.

### **Risks and benefits**

While medications are used to treat or manage many diseases and health conditions like arthritis, diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease, it's important to remember that both prescription and over-the-counter medications can have potentially serious side effects. Mixing medication and alcohol can be especially dangerous.

### **Avoiding too much medication**

As the saying goes, "All things in moderation." The following steps will help prevent you from taking too much medication:

- Stop taking a medication after your provider replaces it with a new one.
- Do not take a medication prescribed for someone else.
- Only take the prescribed amount of a medication.
- If you see more than one provider, make sure to give each of them a complete, up-to-date list of the medications you are taking.

All patients should keep a current list of their medications to show their provider during each visit.

Remember to always follow the provider and pharmacist's instructions for frequency and dose, how to store the medication or whether to take it with food or on an empty stomach.

### **What your provider needs to know**

In order to make a proper diagnosis and appropriately prescribe medication, your provider needs information. Be prepared to answer the following questions when you call or visit your provider:

#### **Symptoms**

What are they? When did they start? How long have they lasted? Have they changed over time? Have you had similar symptoms before? If so, when? What was the diagnosis at that time?

#### **Medications**

What prescription medications are you currently taking? What over-the-counter medications, including herbal supplements, are you taking?

#### **Current health problems**

What chronic diseases or health problems do you have?

#### **Allergies and reactions**

What medications are you allergic to? What happens when you take those medications? What medications have caused side effects in the past?