

CHAPTER
3

Medicines

Learning About Medicines



medicines



prescription



pharmacy



RX medicine label

OTC medicine label



pharmacist

Medicines

Medicines are something you use when you are sick and want to get better. You can also use medicines to stay healthy. Medicines are sometimes called **drugs**.

Some medicines are sold **over-the-counter (OTC)**. OTC medicines are for common health problems such as colds or flu. Anyone can buy over-the-counter medicines at a **pharmacy**. A pharmacy can also be called a **drugstore**.

Some medicines are sold only with a **prescription**. The symbol for prescription medicine is **Rx**.

You must have a prescription from a doctor to buy a prescription medicine. Take the prescription to a pharmacy and give the prescription to the **pharmacist**. He or she will prepare the medicine for you.



This chapter will answer these questions.

- How do I read medicine labels?
- How do I measure and take medicines?
- How can a pharmacist help?

Different Kinds of Medicines



tablets



liquid



powder



drops



injection



inhalant



ointment



capsules

Medicines come in many other forms too. You use different medicines in different ways. Some pills you swallow but you do not chew. Other pills you chew and then swallow. You can chew **tablets**. Do not chew **capsules**.

Some medicines are in the form of a liquid or **syrup**. Most cough medicines come in a liquid or syrup. You swallow most cough syrups.

To learn exactly how to take your medicines you must read the **medicine labels**.

Famous Sayings About Staying Healthy

"Laughter is the best medicine."

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

How do I Read Medicine Labels?

All medicines have labels. Labels usually tell you:

- The name of the medicine.
- What the medicine is for.
- How and when to take the medicine.
- How much of the medicine to take.
- What **side effects** the medicine has.
- Warnings.
- **Expiration date.**
- Other information.

Prescription medicine labels also tell you the name of the doctor that prescribed the medicine and the name of the **patient** who will use the medicine. Over-the-counter (OTC) medicines do not have a doctor's name or a patient's name on the label.

One label has the name of a patient. Which medicine is a prescription medicine? Which is an OTC medicine?



OTC Medicine Labels - Drug Facts

The OTC medicine Drug Facts label looks like this.

Active ingredient tells you the drug's scientific name and how much is in each tablet, capsule or liquid.

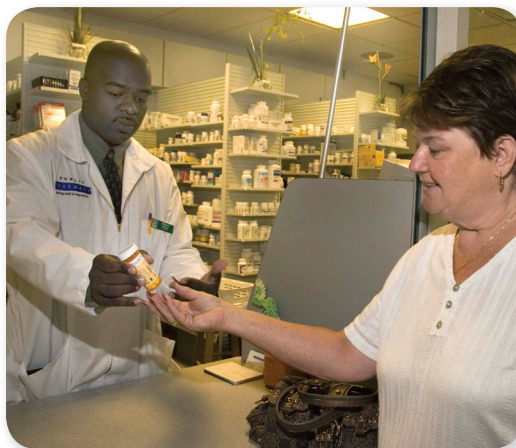
Uses describes the symptoms (sickness, feelings) that the medicine treats.

Warnings include when NOT to use the medicine, and when to talk to your doctor before using the medicine.

Directions tell you exactly how much of the medicine to take and when to take it.

Other information may include how to store and protect the medicine, an expiration date and other information.

Drug Facts	
Active ingredient	Purpose
Ketoconazole 1%.....	Anti-dandruff shampoo
Uses controls flaking, scaling and itching associated with dandruff	
Warnings	
For external use only	
Do not use	
■ on scalp that is broken or inflamed	
■ if you are allergic to ingredients in this product	
When using this product	
■ avoid contact with eyes	
■ if product gets into eyes, rinse thoroughly with water	
Stop use and ask a doctor if	
■ rash appears	
■ condition worsens or does not improve in 2-4 weeks	
If pregnant or breast-feeding, ask a doctor before use.	
Keep out of the reach of children. If swallowed, get medical help or contact a Poison Control Center right away.	
Directions	
adults and children 12 years and over	■ wet hair thoroughly
	■ apply shampoo, generously lather, rinse thoroughly. Repeat
	■ use every 3-4 days for up to 8 weeks or as directed by a doctor. Then use only as needed to control dandruff
children under 12 years	■ ask a doctor
Other information	
■ store between 35° and 86°F (2° and 30°C)	
■ protect from light ■ protect from freezing	
■ see bottom panel for lot number and expiration date	
Inactive ingredients	
acrylic acid polymer (carbomer 1342), butylated hydroxytoluene, cocamide MEA, FD&C Blue #1, fragrance, glycol distearate, polyquaternium-7, quaternium-15, sodium chloride, sodium cocoyl sarcosinate, sodium hydroxide and/or hydrochloric acid, sodium laureth sulfate, tetrasodium EDTA, water	
Questions or comments?	
call 1-800-962-5357	



◀ If you are not sure what the label says, **ASK THE PHARMACIST.**



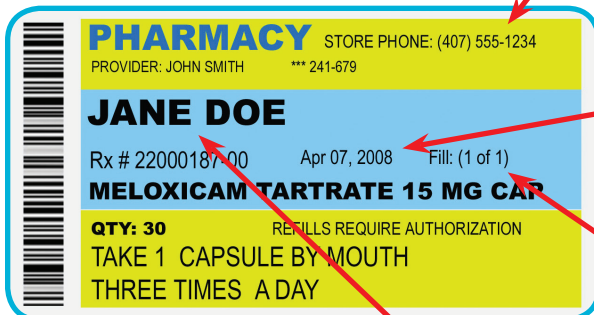
Prescription Medicine Labels

Prescription medicine labels look like this.

Name of medicine may be a different name than the name you use. Ask your pharmacist: "What other names does this medicine have?"

Dose tells you how much of the medicine you take at one time.

Rx # is the prescription number. You use this number when you ask the pharmacy to refill your medicine.



Pharmacy phone number is the number you call if you have any questions or if you need to refill your medicine.

Date filled is the date in which you got the medicine.

Number of refills is how many times you can refill (get more of) this medicine. If you have no refills left you must call your doctor to get another prescription.

Your name and your doctor's name is on all your prescription medicine labels.

How do I Measure and Take Medicines?

Some medicines you take “by mouth”. But not all medicines go in the mouth. For example, some medicines are creams (also called ointments) that you rub on the skin. Make sure you know how to take your medicine so you do not take it the wrong way.

All medicine labels give directions.

The directions tell you:

- How to take the medicine.
- How much to take.
- How often to take it.







It is very important to use medicines correctly. Do not share prescription medicines with friends and family members. Medicines can cause sickness or even kill a person when used the wrong way.

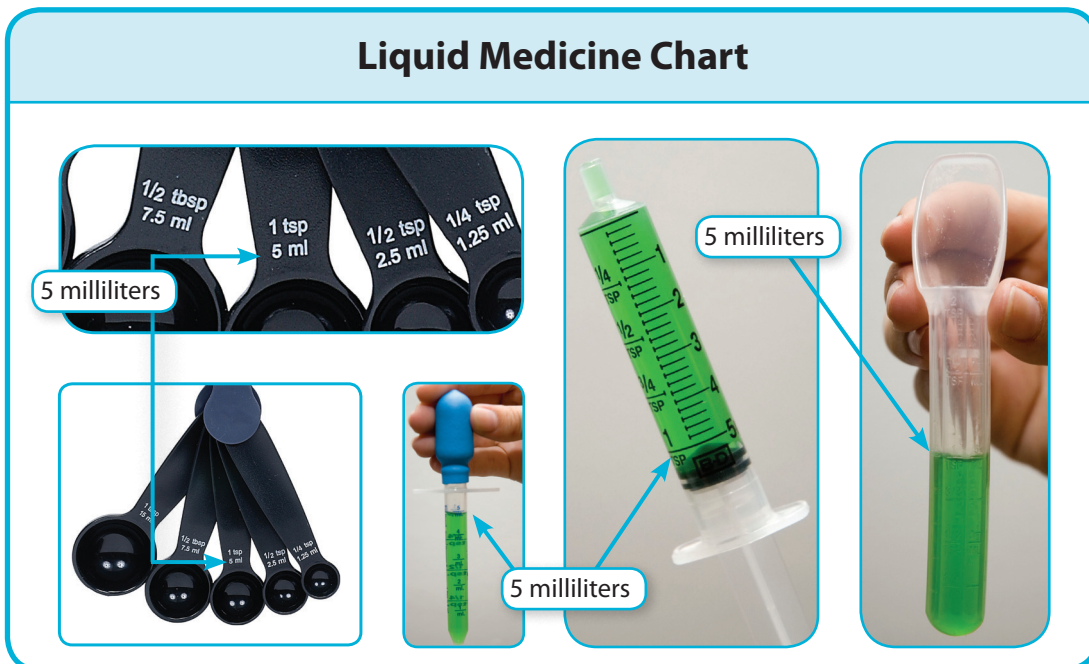
How Much

The directions tell you how many pills to take at one time.

For example, TAKE 1 TABLET THREE TIMES A DAY. The chart shows one tablet.

Pill Medicine Chart		
1 capsule	one capsule	 side view
1 tablet	one tablet	 side view
1/2 tablet	one-half tablet	
1/4 tablet	one-fourth tablet	

The directions tell you how much liquid medicine to **measure** and take at one time. For example, TAKE 1 TEASPOON EVERY 4 HOURS. The chart shows one teaspoon (5 millimeters).



How Often

The directions also tell you how often to take the medicine. For example, TAKE 1 TEASPOON EVERY 4 HOURS. Look on the chart below to find out what time you take a medicine when the directions say, “take every 4 hours”.

How Often And When To Take Your Medicine		
How often to take it	When to take it	
Once a day 1 time a day		<p>Take the medicine 1 time each day.</p> <p>ASK your doctor or pharmacist at what time to take it</p>
Twice a day 2 times a day		<p>Take the medicine 2 times each day.</p> <p>Example: 7 AM and 7 PM</p>
Three times a day 3 times a day		<p>Take the medicine 3 times each day.</p> <p>Example: 8 AM, 1 PM, and 6 PM</p>
Every four hours Every 4 hours		<p>Take the medicine every 4 hours.</p> <p>Example: 8 AM, 12 noon, 4 PM, and 8 PM</p>
Every six hours Every 6 hours		<p>Take the medicine every 6 hours.</p> <p>Example: 6 AM, 12 noon, 6 PM, and 12 midnight</p>

Medicine Side Effects

Every medicine can have **side effects**. For example, a medicine that helps stop headache may also make a person dizzy.

- Main effect – stops headache
- Side effect – person feels dizzy

Some side effects can make a person very sick. Ask your doctor or pharmacist what side effects a medicine can cause. Be sure to call your doctor if you have any side effects.

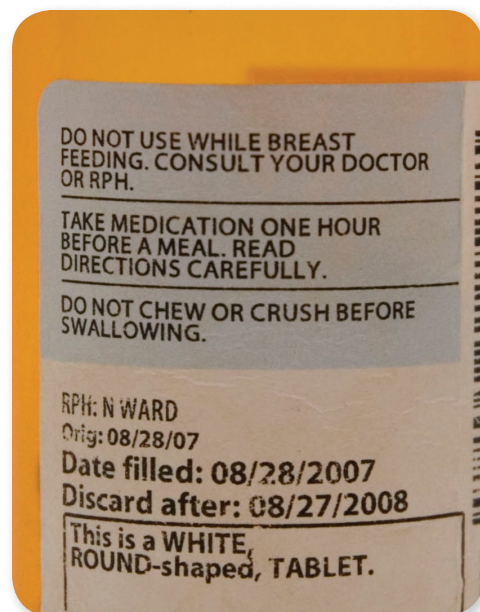
If you accidentally take too much medicine at one time (overdose) or ingest something that might be poisonous, immediately call the Florida Poison Control Hotline at 1-800-222-1222.

Warning Labels


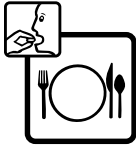

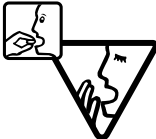




Warning labels tell you how to avoid problems. It is important that you understand and follow these warnings. If you do not understand the warning labels, ask your doctor or pharmacist what they mean.

The medicine in the picture (right) has 3 warnings on its label:

- Do not use while breast feeding.
Consult your doctor or RPH.
- Take medication one hour before a meal.
Read directions carefully.
- Do not chew or crush before swallowing.



This chart shows medicine warning labels and what they mean.

Warning Label Chart		
Warning Label	Warning Picture	What the Warning Means
Take on empty stomach.		Take this medicine a few hours before or after you eat. Example: 2 hours before lunch. Do NOT take with meals.
Take with food. TAKE THIS MEDICINE WITH A SNACK OR SMALL MEAL IF STOMACH UPSET OCCURS.		Take this medicine with a snack or a meal.
DO NOT USE IF PREGNANT OR SUSPECT YOU ARE PREGNANT OR ARE BREASTFEEDING.		If you are pregnant, do NOT take this medicine. If you are breastfeeding a baby, do NOT use this medicine.
MAY CAUSE DROWSINESS.		Drowsiness is when you feel sleepy. Do NOT drive or use machines while taking this medicine.
EXTERNAL USE ONLY.		Do NOT put this in your mouth. Do not chew or swallow it.
AVOID DIRECT SUNLIGHT.		Protect yourself from the sun while taking this medicine. No tanning.
LIMIT ALCOHOL USE WHILE TAKING THIS DRUG. DAILY ALCOHOL USE IS RISKY.		Do NOT drink alcohol while taking this medicine. No beer, wine, or liquor.
Keep out of the reach of children.		This medicine can hurt or kill children. Keep this and all medicines away from children.

Herbal Medicines

Many people use herbal medicines in addition to Rx and OTC medicines. Herbal medicines come from plants like garlic and ginseng. Some medicines can **interact** with other medicines. Interactions can make the medicines not work or cause health problems. To avoid medicine interactions, tell your doctor about all the medicines you use, even the herbal medicines. Keep a list of all the medicines you use and share the list with your doctor.



Check Your Learning

How many milliliters (ml) are in one teaspoon?

- 1 ml
- 1.5 ml
- 5 ml



Key Points

- Read and understand medicine labels.
- Take medicines correctly.
- Understand and follow warning labels.
- Ask your doctor and pharmacist questions.

How Can a Pharmacist Help?

Your pharmacist can help you understand how to take your medicines correctly. Here is a list of questions you can ask your pharmacist.

- What is the medicine for?
- Why is it important to take it?
- How do I take it correctly?
- Is it okay to take it with the other medicines I take?
- How long should I take it?
- What side effects should I look for?

If you have trouble paying for your medicines, your doctor or pharmacist can help. Your pharmacist may be able to give you **generic medicines** that are less expensive and just as good as the name brand medicines.

Dialog

Pharmacist: How may I help you?

Patient: I need to fill this prescription, please.

Pharmacist: Have you been here before?

Patient: Yes, I have.

Pharmacist: What is your date of birth?

Patient: January 18th, 1979

Pharmacist: Which doctor prescribed this to you?

Patient: Dr. Smith

Pharmacist: Ok, it will take about fifteen minutes.

Patient: Ok, I'll wait.

Pharmacist: OK. [Fills prescription.] Here you are. Do you have any questions?

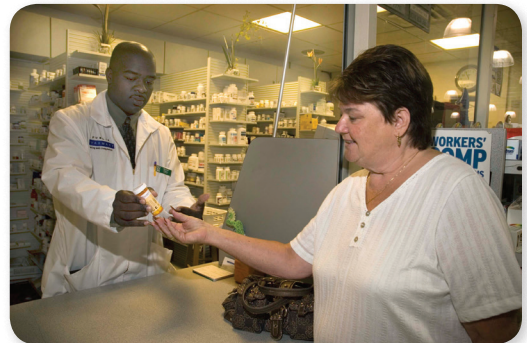
Patient: Yes. How do I take this medicine?

Pharmacist: Take 2 capsules twice a day.

Patient: When should I take them?

Pharmacist: Take two capsules in the morning and two in the evening.

Patient: Thank you.



How Can I Learn More?

Visit these websites to learn more about medicines.

Information

Use Medicine Safely

healthfinder.gov/healthtopics/population/older-adults/safety/use-medicines-safely

How to Give Medicine to Children

familydoctor.org/how-to-give-your-child-medicine/

Safe Use of Medicines for Older Adults

nia.nih.gov/sites/default/files/safe_use_of_medicines_0.pdf

Medicines and Older Adults

fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/ucm163959.htm

Create a Personalized Pill Card

goo.gl/eR5bP4

Herbal Products Plus Prescription Medications: Dangerous Combinations

poisoncentertampa.org/poison-topics/herbals/

Learn About Your Medicines

fda.gov/ForPatients/ucm412663.htm

Medline Plus: Drugs, Supplements and Herbal Information

nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginformation.html

Activities

LaRue Medical Literacy Exercises

mcedservices.com/medex/medex.htm

Medicine Vocabulary Practice

reepworld.org/englishpractice/health/medicine/index.htm

Free or Low Cost Services

RX Assist Patient Assistance Program Center (Directory of patient assistance medication programs)

rxassist.org

Florida Discount Drug Card

floridadiscountdrugcard.com

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