



Preventing Medication Errors



Overview

Even if you're careful with your medications, mistakes happen. And with medication, even a small error can have big consequences. So let's take a moment to learn how to avoid medication errors.

The basics

First, don't forget the basics. Make and keep a list of all of the drugs you take. Include all the medications you have a doctor's prescription for. Include over-the-counter medicines. Include supplements and herbs, too. And list any drugs you've had a bad reaction to in the past. Always show this list to your doctor every time you see them. And make sure someone in your family has a copy of your medication list.

Check the name

Next, whenever your doctor prescribes a drug for you, ask for the drug's name. Every time you pick it up at the pharmacy, check the label to make sure you got the right drug. While you're there, talk to the pharmacist. Ask questions. Make sure you understand what the drug is for and how to take it. Ask about possible side effects. And ask when you should stop taking it.

Follow the instructions

Finally, read the label and follow the instructions. Don't rely on your memory, read the label every time. For more tips on drug safety, talk to your doctor.