







# Medicine Safety Tips At The Doctor's Office

Going to the doctor’s office can be an overwhelming experience. Having a basic plan can help you make the most of your appointment. Whether this is the first time meeting a new doctor or seeing a doctor you have known for years, the following tips can help your overall visit go smoothly.

## Here's What You Can Do

-  **Bring a list of all the medicines you take.** Your list of medicines should include all prescription medicines, over-the-counter products, and supplements (e.g., vitamins, herbals). These should include medicine you take on a regular basis and those that you may take on occasion. Bring the list with you every time you go to the doctor’s office, especially if you see more than one doctor. Do not be afraid to ask questions about the medicines you currently take. And make sure to update your list if your doctor prescribes something new, makes changes to a medicine, or tells you to stop taking a certain medicine.
-  **Share previous reactions you have had to certain medicines.** Tell your doctor if you ever had a reaction (e.g., allergy, severe nausea or vomiting) to a certain medicine. For example, if you were prescribed a medicine and you developed a skin rash, your doctor will probably not prescribe that medicine for you again. As a result, your doctor will be able to select a different medicine for you to take which may work better for you.
-  **Understand the reason you need to take the medicine.** Ask your doctor to include the reason you need to take the medication on the prescription. Knowing why you need to take the medicine will help both you and your pharmacist make sure the medicine is the right medicine for you.
-  **Ask for a paper copy of any prescriptions that are sent to the pharmacy.** Most doctors are able to send a prescription directly to your pharmacy through the computer. So, you no longer need to take a paper prescription to the pharmacy. However, it is important to know the name of the medicine, the dose, and how often and when it should be taken. Ask for a paper copy of the prescription or a description that includes the name of the medicine, the dose, and how and when it should be taken.





- ✓ **Bring the copy of the prescription to the pharmacy.** Before leaving the pharmacy, compare the information on your copy of the prescription to the medicine you received. Make sure the label on the medicine you received has the same information that is listed on the prescription copy.
- ✓ **Use samples of medicine as instructed.** If your doctor gives you samples: Make sure you receive specific information about the sample:
  - The name of the medicine
  - The reason you need to use the medicine
  - The dose of the medicine
  - How and when to take the medicine
  - If it is okay to take the sample medicine with other medicine(s) you normally take. You may need to check with your pharmacist.

If you are prescribed medications or given drug samples at a doctor's visit, these can be a confusing and daunting addition to your daily life, especially when you are taking multiple medicines. However, by taking these "safe practice" tips and proactive steps, mentioned above, you will improve your overall experience at your next doctor's visit and have a good understanding of all your new and current medications. Most importantly, if you have any questions or concerns with any medication, always reach out and consult with your doctor and pharmacist.

## Doctor's Offices are Not Childproof



If you have young children or grandchildren, you are probably used to being on the lookout for danger in your home and the child's play areas. But a doctor's office might be an unrecognized source of danger. Nurses and doctors typically keep chemicals and medicines locked and out of reach until they are needed. But once these products are removed from a cabinet, right before use, they may be left out where children may be able to get them. Other small objects when accidentally left out, such as caps to a syringe, can cause choking if a child puts it in their mouth. If children must be in an exam room with you, always take additional precautions to keep children safe.