Know about your prescription before leaving the doctor's office. Make sure you know the name of the medicine your doctor prescribed for you, both the brand and generic names; what the dosage is; how to take the medicine; and why you need to take the medicine. If the prescription is sent by the computer directly to the pharmacy, be sure to ask your doctor for a paper copy of the prescription information. This way you will have the information written down. You will then be able to compare it to the prescription given to you at the pharmacy.

Medicine Safety Tips At The Pharmacy

While pharmacists do their best to avoid making a mistake while filling a prescription, it is possible an error may occur. Sometimes the error is identified before the medicine leaves the pharmacy, but it is not. This means a person may leave the pharmacy with the wrong medicine or the wrong dosage of medicine. Luckily, there are steps you can take to make sure you don't take the wrong medicine or dose. In fact, you play a very important role in keeping yourself and your loved ones safe. Use the safety tips below as a guide when getting prescriptions filled at your local pharmacy.

Here's What You Can Do

- **Know about your prescription before leaving the doctor's office.** Make sure you know the name of the medicine your doctor prescribed for you, both the brand and generic names; what the dosage is; how to take the medicine; and why you need to take the medicine. If the prescription is sent by the computer directly to the pharmacy, be sure to ask your doctor for a paper copy of the prescription information. This way you will have the information written down. You will then be able to compare it to the prescription given to you at the pharmacy.

- **When you arrive at the pharmacy to pick up your medicine:**
  - **Identify yourself.** Give the person at the pharmacy counter your full name and date of birth when picking up medicines. If you are picking up medicine for someone else, make sure you provide their full name and their date of birth. Always provide two forms of identification (name and date of birth).
  - **Ask to speak to the pharmacist if the medicine is new.** Any time you are prescribed a new medicine, ask to speak with the pharmacist when you pick up your prescription. Your pharmacist can tell you important information about the medicine. For example, you may need to take it with food, you may need to take it at a certain time of day, or you may need to avoid sun exposure.
Open the bag. One of the most important steps you can take is to open the bag of medicine before you leave the pharmacy. By opening the bag, you can make sure the medicine is what you expect. In addition:

- Make sure the correct person's name is on the label.
- Make sure the name of the medicine is listed on the label and is what you expected.
- Make sure the dose and directions are listed on label.
- Most prescription labels will also have a description of the shape, color, and imprint code of the medicine that is inside the bottle. If the description is different than the tablet/capsule that is in the bottle, ask to speak to the pharmacist.
- Read the drug information sheet that you receive with your prescription. If the name of the medicine on the sheet is different than expected or if it doesn't make sense, ask your pharmacist.

Update your contact information. Be sure your pharmacy has your current phone number/s, email address, and any emergency contact information. If the pharmacy detects an error with your medicines after you leave, they will need to contact you.

Use only one pharmacy, when possible. It is best to get all of your prescriptions filled at one pharmacy. This will allow your pharmacist to check for medicines that may interact with each other or to make sure the same type of medicine was not prescribed for you. If you use one pharmacy or more than one pharmacy, provide each of them with an:

- Up-to-date list of medicines. Your pharmacy should have a current list of all your medicines. These include all prescription medicines, herbals, supplements, and over-the-counter (OTC) medicines you take. Some medicines can cause problems if you take them while taking other. So, your pharmacist needs to know all the medicines you take to be sure it is safe to take them together.

- Up-to-date list of medicines you are allergic to. If you are allergic to a certain medicine, be sure your pharmacist has this information. Some medicines may contain an ingredient you are allergic to. The pharmacist will be able to contact your doctor to request a different medicine.

- Up-to-date contact information. Be sure the pharmacy has the correct spelling of your name, your date of birth, and your current address. Use all of this information when picking up your medicine to make sure the medicine is for you.