

## Keeping your medicines organized

### Definition

If you take a lot of different medicines, you may find it hard to keep them straight. You may forget to take your medicine, take the wrong dose, or take them at the wrong time.

Learn some tips to make taking all of your medicines easier.

### Create an Organizing System That Works for you

Create an organizing system to help you decrease mistakes with your medicine. Here are some suggestions.

#### USE A PILL ORGANIZER

You can buy a pill organizer at the drug store or online. There are many kinds. Ask the pharmacist to help you pick out an organizer that will work best for you.

Things to think about when choosing a pill organizer:

- The number of days, such as 7, 14, or 28-day size.
- The number of compartments for each day, such as 1, 2, 3, or 4 compartments.
- For example, if you take medicine 4 times each day, you can use a 7-day pill organizer with 4 compartments for each day (morning, noon, evening, and bedtime). Fill the pill organizer to last 7 days. Some pill organizers let you snap out one day's worth of pills. You can carry this with you if you are out all day. You can also use a different 7-day pill organizer for the 4 times of the day. Label each one with the time of day.

#### USE AN AUTOMATIC PILL DISPENSER

You can buy an automatic pill dispenser online. These dispensers:

- Hold 7 to 28 days' worth of pills.
- Dispense pills automatically up to 4 times per day.
- Have a blinking light and an audio alarm to remind you to take your pills.
- Run on batteries. Change the batteries regularly.
- Need to be filled with your medicine. You can fill it yourself, or have a trusted friend, relative, or pharmacist fill the dispenser.
- Do not allow you to take the medicine out. This can be a problem if you are going out.

#### USE COLOR MARKS ON YOUR MEDICINE BOTTLES

Use a color marker to label your medicines by the time of day that you take them. For example:

- Put a green mark on bottles of medicines that you take at breakfast.
- Put a red mark on bottles of medicines that you take at lunch.
- Put a blue mark on bottles of medicines that you take at dinner.

## CREATE A MEDICINE RECORD

List the medicine, what time you take it, and leave a place to check off when you take each medicine.

### Know Your Medicines

Put on the list any prescription medicines, over-the-counter drugs, and vitamins, herbs, and supplements that you take. Include the:

- Name of the medicine
- Description of what it does
- Dose
- Times of day you take it
- Side effects

### Use a Regular Doctor and Pharmacist

Bring the list and your medicines in their bottles to your health care provider appointments and when you go to the pharmacy.

- When you know your provider and your pharmacist, you will find it easier to talk to them. You want good communication about your medicines.
- Review your drug list with your provider or pharmacist.
- Ask if there are any problems with taking any of your medicines together.
- Know what to do if you miss your dose. Most of the time, you move on and take the next dose when it is due. Do not take a double dose. Check with your provider or pharmacist.

### When to Call the Doctor

Call the provider when you are:

- Not sure what to do if you missed or forgot your medicine.
- Having trouble remembering to take your medicine.
- Having trouble taking a lot of medicine. Your provider may be able to cut back on some of your medicine. Do not cut back or stop taking any medicines on your own. Talk to your provider first.

### Alternative Names

Pill organizer; Pill dispenser

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Review Date: August 13, 2020.

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