

## Medication Safety

*Your care and safety are our first priority at Billings Clinic. Please use this guide to work together with your physicians and pharmacists.*

### Talk to your pharmacist

Medicine labels can be hard to understand. For example, ask if “four times daily” means taking a dose every six hours around the clock, or just during waking hours. Don’t hesitate to question anything you don’t understand or that doesn’t seem right. Be especially alert to changes in appearance, color, shape, and dosage strength when you refill your prescription.

1. When you pick up your medicine, ask, “Is this the medicine that my physician prescribed?”
2. Check the label on the medication your pharmacist has given you with the directions your physician gave to you. If you have questions about the directions, ask.
3. Check to see if there are any differences in the written discharge medication list from Billings Clinic and the label on the medication your pharmacy has given you.
4. If you have questions, ask the pharmacist to call your physician.

Ask your pharmacist about the best way to measure your liquid medicine. For example, many teaspoons do not hold a true teaspoon of liquid. Special devices such as marked oral syringes help people to measure the right dose.

- Ask whether the medication should be taken with food or on an empty stomach.
  - Ask if you should swallow or chew the medicine, or if it can be cut or crushed.
  - Ask if certain medications should be avoided or not taken with other medications.
  - Ask how you can monitor for any intended benefit or adverse effects.
  - Ask what you should do if you miss a dose.
  - Ask for written information about what side effects your medicine could cause and which ones to worry about.
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- *Take medicine as it is prescribed by your doctor. Don't stop taking your medicine without talking with your doctor.*
  - *Be sure to discard old medications.*
  - *Don't share your medications with other patients.*

### Talk to your physician or nurse

Tell all of your physicians about all the medicines you are taking, including prescriptions, over-the-counter medicines (for example, aspirin) and dietary supplements such as vitamins and herbs.

### Carry a list

For your safety, always carry a list of any and all medications you are taking. Include all medications prescribed by a doctor, over-the-counter medications and any homeopathic medicines, vitamins and/or herbal products. **Please bring this list and all medicines you are currently taking to your appointment.**



### Tell your physician

Tell your physician about any allergies and reactions that you have had to medicines. Keep a list of medicines you cannot take.

When you are given a prescription, make sure you understand the following:

1. What is it for? How will it help me? How am I supposed to take it, and for how long?
2. What side effects are likely? What do I do if side effects occur?
3. Is this medicine safe to take with other medicines or dietary supplements, including herbs?
4. What food, drink, or activities should I avoid while taking this medicine? Ask if it's safe to drink alcohol.

### Help us take better care of you!

Research shows that patients who are more involved with their care tend to get better results. Every time you come to see us, we will be asking about your medications. Your physicians need to know what medicines you are taking. It's also important for you to understand why you are taking those medicines. As part of your care, you will receive a detailed list of the current medications you are taking. Your care provider will discuss this list with you. On this list, there may be medications identified that you will need to follow up on.



**Billings Clinic**

*Your medication list*

Name

Date

Allergies

Medication	Dose	Route	Frequency	As Needed