

Poison Prevention Press

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MPC Poison Safety Info On the Go

Get important poison safety tips and other information wherever you are.

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mdpoison.com

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Program 1-800-222-1222 into your mobile phones. Text "POISON" to 797979 and save the contact card.

Did you know that...

- Therapeutic errors (double doses, taking the wrong medicine, etc.) accounted for 15% of exposures reported to the MPC in 2018?
- 70% of the calls involving older adults in 2018 were about medicines?

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Take Charge of Your Health

About 60% of the cases managed by the Maryland Poison Center (MPC) in 2018 involved one or more medicines. Below, we discuss how you can be an active participant in your health care, as well as how caregivers can play an important role in medicine safety.

Medicine List

When at a medical appointment, be sure to discuss your medicines with your doctors. Each of them should know about all of the medicines you take, including prescriptions, over-the-counter (OTC) medicines, vitamins, and supplements. Keep an up-to-date list of all of the medicines you take, and bring it with you to all of your medical appointments. This will help your health care providers prevent interactions between medicines they may want to prescribe and those you are already taking.

Prescriptions

When you refill prescriptions, make sure to allow enough time for your pharmacy to fill the prescription and for you to pick it up, so that you don't run out of medicine. Missing doses for some medicines can be harmful. Some pharmacies offer automatic refills; ask your pharmacist, as this could help ensure that you get your prescription(s) filled on time. You might also be able to mail-order some prescriptions. Always be sure to read the entire label before taking a medicine.

OTC (Over-the-Counter), Vitamins, and Supplements

Include all of the medicines you take on your medicine list. People often think that OTC medicines are safer than prescriptions, but that is not true. OTC medicines and supplements can interact with your prescription medicines, as well as other OTC medicines. Always read the label of any medicine you take, including the warning section. It may have a warning for one or more of the prescriptions you take. You can also ask your pharmacist to review your medicine list for possible interactions.

Questions? Ask!

If you have questions, don't guess! Ask your doctor, pharmacist, or the poison center. If you don't know why you're taking a medicine, how much to take, what time of day to take it, or if there are any restrictions, ask your doctor. You may find it helpful to write down a list of questions that you want to ask the doctor before going to a medical appointment to ensure you don't forget. If a pill looks different when you pick up your refill, ask your pharmacist or the person giving it to you if it's the right medicine. If you start a new medicine, ask your doctor if you should stop any of your other medicines. Call the poison center if you think you took an extra dose or if you are having an adverse effect from a medicine. You should also call the poison center if you can't remember if you took your medicine. We can let you know whether it is best to skip the dose or take it again.

Safe medicine use is a shared responsibility between you, your doctor, your pharmacist, other health care professionals, and in some instances, even a family caregiver.