



# Tips for Taking Your Medications Correctly



# After Hospital Discharge

- When you get home after being discharged from the hospital, compare your medication bottles with the list in your discharge paperwork.
- If you use a pill box, refill the box according to your new medication list.
- Make sure you take out any medications that have been stopped.
- If you keep a separate medication list, update your list to reflect any changes.

# Making a Medication List

- Your medication list should include all medications you take—prescription, over the counter, vitamins, supplements, eye drops, ointments, etc.
- For each medication you should list out:
  - The name of the medication
  - The dose of the medication (number and unit)
    - *For example:* 15 mg or 10 IU
  - The route
    - *For example:* by mouth, nebulized, topically
  - The timing
    - *For example:* once daily, twice daily, every six hours
- Make a note of medications that you take only “as needed.”






# Medication Instructions

- If you have specific instructions for your medications, put that information on your list too.
  - *For example:* take with food, hold if systolic BP is <100, take for constipation.
- You may want to include why you're taking each medication on your list.
  - *For example:* diabetes, blood pressure, cholesterol.
- Finally, it may be helpful to include which physician prescribed each medication so you know who to contact if you have any questions or concerns.



# A Note about Medication Names

- There are a couple of medications that have a “first name” and a “last name.”
- The two most important ones are metoprolol and insulin.
- There is a difference between metoprolol tartrate (Lopressor) and metoprolol succinate (Toprol).
- There is a difference between insulin aspart and insulin glargine.
- Be sure to include both the first and last names of these medications on your list.



## A Note about Medication Names (cont.)

- Many medications have both a generic name and a brand name.
- Make sure you aren't taking duplicate medications.
- For example, don't fill your pill box with one atorvastatin and one Lipitor. (Lipitor is the brand name for the generic drug atorvastatin.)

# Pharmacists

- Your pharmacist can be a great resource if you have any questions about your medications.
- They can help you to understand how to take them- like if you need to take them with food.
- They can also help to explain any side effects.







# Following Up with Your Doctor

- Be sure to follow up with your cardiologist within 30 days of being discharged from the hospital.
- Sometimes you are only given a 30 day supply of a medication when you leave the hospital and your doctor needs to reorder the prescription.
- Bring an up to date medication list every time you have a doctor's appointment.
- Ask you doctor about the technique for administering medications like an inhaler or an injection. Bring the medication with you to your appointment to ensure you are doing it correctly.



# Concerns about Medications

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TAKING YOUR MEDICATIONS  
CORRECTLY CAN BE  
COMPLICATED AND  
CHALLENGING.



REACH OUT TO YOUR  
PHYSICIANS IF YOU HAVE ANY  
QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT YOU  
SHOULD BE TAKING.



IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS  
ABOUT YOUR MEDICATIONS,  
PLEASE SPEAK TO YOUR  
PHYSICIAN BEFORE STOPPING  
ANY OF YOUR MEDICATIONS.

# Tips if You Find Yourself Forgetting

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Try setting an alarm on your phone to take your medications.



If you are often forgetting your evening or bedtime medications, try taking your medications at the same part of your bedtime routine (for example: right before you brush your teeth).



Keep your pill box or bottles in a place where you will see it.