

Liver Wellness

Increasing Public Awareness
of Liver Health



Managing Your Medications



Your Liver. Your Life.



Managing Your Medications

Medicines can help you feel better and keep you feeling well, but they can be hard to manage.

When medicines are taken incorrectly — by taking too much or the wrong type or by mixing medicines — your liver can be harmed.

That is why **Managing Your Medications** is so important for your health and the health of your liver.

To learn more about Managing Your Medications, visit www.liverfoundation.org/mym.

For more information about the American Liver Foundation and liver wellness, visit the rest of our website at www.liverfoundation.org or call **1-800-GO-LIVER**.



Your Liver. Your Life.

Why is managing medications important to my liver?

Everything we eat, drink, and breathe is processed by the liver, including all the medicines we take:

- Over-the-counter medicines
- Prescription medicines
- Vitamins
- Dietary supplements
- Alternative medicines

Learn as much as you can about your medicines and how they affect your liver. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist often. They can help you keep your liver healthy and manage your medications.

When you take medicines, it is important to:

FOLLOW dosing instructions.

Take medicine as directed.

READ the label.

Read drug labels carefully.

TALK to your doctor or pharmacist.

They can answer any questions you may have.

KNOW your medicines.

Learn as much as you can about the medicines you take.

USE responsibly.

Remember — more medicine is not better!



How can I manage my medications?

It is important to know what medicines you take and learn how they affect you. Whether you are someone living with chronic liver disease, a college student making health decisions for the first time, a parent caring for your children, or anyone taking an active role in their health — taking medication correctly means more than just taking the right amount at the right time. It also means learning about the medicines you take and how they mix with each other.

What about alcohol and medicines?

Talk to your doctor about how alcohol affects your liver. Mixing alcohol and medicines can be harmful, even if they are not taken at the same time.

DID YOU KNOW?

A damaged liver may not process medicines as well as a healthy liver.

.....

Alcohol has been shown to cause many liver diseases to progress faster.

.....

A damaged liver can make side effects of medicines worse.

What if I have a liver disease?

If you have a liver disease, your liver may not be working at its best and now, more than ever, it is important to be careful about the medicines you take. People with liver disease need to be especially aware — some medicines may cause more damage to your liver or may not be processed normally.

It is very important to tell your doctor or pharmacist about all the medicines you take and always check with them first before starting a new medicine. After talking with them, you may find you are able to take some medicines, like acetaminophen, without further damaging your liver.

Common Medications

Here is a brief list of some of the most commonly prescribed medications for select liver diseases:

Hepatitis B

- Telbivudine (Tyzeka)
- Adefovir (Hepsera)
- Lamivudine (Epivir)
- Entecavir (Baraclude)

Hepatitis C

- Interferons, Standard and Pegalated (Interferon Alpha, Intron A, Pegasys, Peginteron)
- Ribavirin (Copegus, Rebetol)

Autoimmune Hepatitis

- Prednisone
- Azathioprine (Imuran)

Primary Biliary Cirrhosis (PBC)

- Ursodeoxycholic acid (Urso, Ursodiol)



Here are some helpful tips for managing your medications.

▼ Tip 1

FOLLOW dosing instructions

Use tools to remind you to take your medicine as directed.

There are many useful tools that can help you remember how and when to take each medicine. Start by making a list of every medication you use, including the amount you take and time of day you take it. Keep the list up-to-date and bring it with you when you see your doctor or pharmacist. It also helps to have a daily routine for taking your medicine.

Stay organized with a:

- Medication Tracking Card (in this brochure)
- Pill calendar
- Pill reminder chart
- Weekly pill box

Other tools available include:

- Electronic reminders, such as e-mail, or alarms on wristwatches, cell phones or beepers
- Single dose medicine packages (that your doctor or pharmacist may be able to give to you)
- Stickers, diaries, computer health programs

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about which type of tool or tools work best for you. Also, remember that family and friends can help remind you to take your medication.

▼ Tip 2

READ the label

Read the Drug Facts label for your prescription and over-the-counter medicines.

Many vitamins, supplements, and alternative therapies have labels too. Read those labels as well as the *Drug Facts* labels for all of your prescription and over-the-counter medicines.

Here's what the label means:

Drug Facts	
Active ingredient (in each tablet) Chlorpheniramine maleate 2 mg.....	PurposeAntihistamine
Uses temporarily relieves these symptoms due to hay fever or other upper respiratory allergies: ■ sneezing ■ runny nose ■ itchy, watery eyes ■ itchy throat	
Warnings Ask a doctor before use if you have ■ glaucoma ■ a breathing problem such as emphysema or chronic bronchitis ■ trouble urinating due to an enlarged prostate gland Ask a doctor or pharmacist before use if you are taking tranquilizers or sedatives	
When using this product ■ you may get drowsy ■ avoid alcoholic drinks ■ alcohol, sedatives, and tranquilizers may increase drowsiness ■ be careful when driving a motor vehicle or operating machinery ■ excitability may occur, especially in children	
If pregnant or breast-feeding, ask a health professional before use. Keep out of reach of children. In case of overdose, get medical help or contact a Poison Control Center right away.	
Directions	
adults and children 12 years and over	take 2 tablets every 4 to 6 hours; not more than 12 tablets in 24 hours
children 6 years to under 12 years	take 1 tablet every 4 to 6 hours; not more than 6 tablets in 24 hours
children under 6 years	ask a doctor
Other information ■ store at 20-25°C (68-77°F) ■ protect from excessive moisture	
Inactive ingredients D&C yellow no. 10, lactose, magnesium stearate, microcrystalline cellulose, pregelatinized starch	



Active ingredient/ Purpose section tells you:

- ▶ The part of your medicine that makes it work — its name, what it does, and how much is in each pill or teaspoon (5mL).

Uses section tells you:

- ▶ About problems the medicine will treat.

Warnings section tells you:

- ▶ When you should talk to your doctor first.
- ▶ How the medicine might make you feel.
- ▶ When you should stop using the medicine.
- ▶ When you shouldn't use the medicine.
- ▶ About things you shouldn't do while using the medicine.
- ▶ To check with a doctor before using medicine if you are pregnant or breast-feeding.
- ▶ To keep medicines away from children.

Directions section tells you:

- ▶ How to safely use the medicine.
- ▶ How much to use.
- ▶ How often to use it (how many times per day or how many hours apart).
- ▶ How long you can use it.

Other Information section tells you:

- ▶ How to keep your medicine when you aren't using it.

Inactive Ingredients section tells you:

- ▶ Which ingredients are mixed with the active ingredient to form a pill, add flavor or color, or help the medicine last longer.

▼ Tip 3

TALK to your doctor or pharmacist

They can answer any questions you may have about your medicines.

One of the most important ways to manage your medications is to learn as much as you can about each medicine you take and how they might mix together. Talk to your doctor and pharmacist. They can answer any questions you might have. Keep him/her informed about any changes you make in your medication routine.

Questions to ask your doctor or pharmacist:

- Can this medicine harm my liver?
- How do I take this medicine?
- Do I need any medical tests done while I am taking this medicine (for example, to check liver or kidney functions)?
- How can I tell if the medication is working?
- What should I do if I miss a dose?
- What will happen if I do not take all of this medicine?
- What will happen if I do not take this medicine at all?
- What are the side effects of this medicine?
- May I work, drive, exercise, fly or do other activities when taking this medication?
- Does this medication need to be taken with food or after a meal?
- What foods or drinks can I take with this medicine? What food or drinks do I need to avoid?



Questions for doctor or pharmacist continued...

- Should I avoid alcohol until I finish all of this medicine? Should I avoid alcohol altogether when taking this medicine?
- How will my age and weight affect this medicine?
- Can I use the generic version of the medicine if there is one?
- Do I refill this medicine? If so, when and how often?
- What over-the-counter and prescription medicines, vitamins, dietary supplements and alternative medicines do I need to avoid while taking this medicine?
- Is there any written information available about the medicine? Is it available in large print or in a language other than English?

When taking more than one medicine, ask:

- Do I really need all of these medicines?
- Can these medicines harm my liver when they are taken together?
- What are the risks of taking these medicines together?
- Where can I find more information on all my medicines?

Tip 4

KNOW your medicine

Learn as much as you can about the medicines you take.

For more information on topics covered in this brochure, please view the MYM webpage at **www.liverfoundation.org/mym**. Here you can find more information about medicine, medicine use in children and older adults, and information on those at risk for medication misuse.

▼ Tip 4 continued...

KNOW your medicine

There are many other resources available to you to learn about your medicines.

The resources below have information on drug safety, health conditions, and treatment options. Information is also available in Spanish. For more information on managing your medications, please visit:

▲ **U.S. National Library of Medicine: Drug Information**

www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginformation.html
U.S. government site. Webpage and drug information are available in Spanish.

▲ **U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) 1-888-INFO-FDA (1-888-463-6332)**

www.fda.gov/cder/
U.S. government site. Website for the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research.

▲ **National Council on Patient Information and Education**

www.talkaboutrx.org • www.bemedwise.org
Free downloadable educational resources on safe over-the-counter medication use. Partnership with FDA.

▲ **DrugDigest**

www.drugdigest.org/DD/Home
Provides a drug interaction checker, drug photos, comparisons of drugs and drug side effects.



▼ Tip 5

USE your medications responsibly

How you take your medicines is very important.

Below are some general tips to help you remember what **to do** and what **not to do** when taking medicines.

The Do's and Don'ts

Do keep a list of every medicine — over-the-counter and prescription drugs, vitamins, supplements, and alternative medicines and the dose for each that you take

Do have a routine — take medicine at the same time everyday or as directed

Do check the label before taking medicine. If the print on the container is hard to read, ask your pharmacist if it can be made larger.

Do use medicine only for the symptoms you have (for example, using cold, cough, and sinus medicine only if you have all three)

Do check the labels to see if you are using medicines with the same active ingredient. If you are, make sure your doctor knows

Do check with your doctor or pharmacist before you start, stop or change a medicine

Do use the same pharmacy every time you get your prescription filled. Pharmacies can help you keep track of what you are taking

Do Take medicine as directed

▼ Tip 5 continued...

USE your medications responsibly

The Do's and Don'ts

Don't take any medicines after they have expired

Don't mix medicine with alcohol, hot drinks, caffeine (coffee and soda), acidic foods (grapefruit juice), or dairy products (milk) without talking to your doctor or pharmacist first

Don't take someone else's medicine or share your medicine with someone else

Don't leave medicines where children or pets can find them

Don't take more than the recommended dose — more is not better

Don't wait until you run out of medicine to refill your prescription

Don't take medicine in the dark. Turn on a light to make sure you are taking the right medicine. If you wear eye glasses to read, make sure to wear them when taking medicine

Don't forget to take your medicines with you when you travel or will not be at home. Before you leave, make sure you have enough medication



How to use Your Medication Tracking Card

Tear off the medication tracking card and write down important information about all the medicines you take, including over-the-counter and prescription medicines, vitamins, supplements and alternative therapies. Update the list when you add, stop or change medicines. Bring it with you when you visit your doctor or pharmacist.

If you need more space make a copy of this medication tracking card or download another copy from the American Liver Foundation website at **www.liverfoundation.org**.

For More Information

To learn more about Managing Your Medications, visit **www.liverfoundation.org/mym**.



The Managing Your Medications component of ALF's Liver Wellness Initiative has been generously funded by grants from: McNeil, PPC, Inc. and Abbott Laboratories.



Medication Tracking Card

Punch out card and fold in half.
Fill out card and carry in your wallet.

Medicine	_____	_____	_____
Dose	_____	_____	_____
Exp. Date	_____	_____	_____
Medicine	_____	_____	_____
Dose	_____	_____	_____
Exp. Date	_____	_____	_____
Medicine	_____	_____	_____
Dose	_____	_____	_____
Exp. Date	_____	_____	_____



Medication Tracking Card

This card belongs to

Print Name



Medication Tracking Card (Inside Panel)

Phone # _____

Cell # _____

Primary

Physician _____

Phone # _____

Specialist _____

Phone # _____

Pharmacy _____

Phone # _____

Medicine _____

Dose _____ Exp. Date _____

Medicine _____

Dose _____ Exp. Date _____

Use the back panel to list additional medications ⇨



Your Liver. Your Life.

For more information about
the American Liver Foundation,
visit our website:
www.liverfoundation.org
or call **1-800-GO-LIVER.**