Smart tips for using medications safely

Taking medications the right way is important, particularly when prescribed a new medication and it is especially important to remember when you’re away from your home base with different routines and schedules. Here are tips to help you avoid a medication mishap, no matter where you are.

**Get answers from your healthcare provider. Find out:**

- **The purpose of the drug.** And ask how long you should take it.
- **When and how to take it.** Should you take it with water or food? At what time of day?
- **How it may interact with your other medications**—including non-prescription drugs and nutritional supplements.
- **What activities to avoid.** This could include no driving.
- **The potential side effects.** What should you do if you have a reaction?
- **What happens if you miss a dose?** Do you wait and take it at the next scheduled time, or not?

**More wise tips**

- **Find out if there’s a generic version of the brand name.** And, ask about a prescription for a three-month mail order supply of your regular medications.
- **Double-check a new prescription with the pharmacist.** Drug labels are not always easy to understand!
- **Tell your doctor about any reactions and/or if the medication doesn’t seem to help.**

**Planning a trip?**

- **Pack enough medication to last the entire trip.**
- **Carry a medication/health list.** Include your medications’ generic names (if traveling outside the US), doses, pharmacy name, doctor contact information, your medical conditions and any allergies.
- **Flying? Pack your medications in a carry-on, not in checked bags.** Keep each medication in their original container labeled with the same name as on your airplane ticket. Place all medications in a plastic bag to ease the security screening process.
- **Consider taking along over-the-counter treatments for common ailments.** This may include remedies for diarrhea, seasickness, bug bites, or sunburn.
- **Think about medication reminders.** Set a timer on your phone or watch. Or, pair it with your toothbrush you normally use at a certain time.
Capture Memorable Moments

Taking pictures to chronicle your life and adventures is a great way to create cherished memories. Capturing these moments helps to remember the feelings they evoke. In the digital age we live in, it has become increasingly easy to take pictures and videos and share them with our family, friends and followers. However, this convenience also has come at a cost—we often forget to take into consideration simple forms of respect and actually experiencing the moment! Try these tips next time you’re thinking of taking a picture and sharing it to social media.

- **Savor the moment** and document it in your memory first, before snapping a picture or sharing on social media.
- **Click with care**—don’t take a picture or a video of someone who doesn’t know they’re being photographed or doesn’t want to be photographed.
- **Always ask permission from others before you post pictures**, stories, or videos, or tag them in social media posts.
- **Be careful of what you post on social media and when you post**. For example, if you’re away from home on vacation, posting pictures can tip people off that your home is unoccupied.
- **Practice common sense**. Be aware of your surroundings to avoid accident or injury, and don’t take pictures while driving.
- **Above all, live in the moment**. While taking pictures and videos of people, places and adventures is a great way to remember them forever, balance the desire to capture these memories and actually experience them firsthand, as they’re happening, rather than from behind a screen or lens.
Ways to protect your child online

Kids may be soon returning to classrooms and in-person activities. But they’re still likely to be spending plenty of time online, visiting social networking sites, browsing the internet, etc. It’s more important than ever that parents be aware of what their kids are doing online and help them navigate the cyber world safely.

Here are some smart suggestions:

**Have an ongoing conversation**, agreeing on screen time rules. An example: “No devices allowed at dinner or at bedtime.”

**Know the harms of social media.** Become acquainted with Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, WhatsApp, etc. Be aware that all young kids are vulnerable to seeing posts, status updates and photos that can make them feel unpopular or left out.

**Review what respectful communication is,** and how your child’s words and actions can affect others.

**Use and review privacy settings.** Also explain that passwords, suggestive photos or other private information should not be shared with anyone, not even a best friend.

**Use safety tools.** Use the Safe Search option on browsers, parental controls on Facebook, and other safety tools on social media accounts. Make sure your child’s computer and devices have the latest software updates and anti-virus programs.

**Monitor their internet use.** Use timers, check the cache or browser history and/or install monitoring software.

**Talk frankly about cyberbullying.** It can happen in an email, a text message, a game, or on a social networking site. It might involve spreading rumors or images posted on someone’s profile or passed around for others to see. Ask your kids to let you know if an online message or image makes them feel threatened or hurt. If you fear for your child’s safety, contact the police.

**Check out your kid’s page to look for mean-spirited comments.** Don’t react to the bully, and tell your child not to respond in kind. Instead, work with your child to save the evidence and encourage them to talk to you about it. If the bullying persists, share the record with school officials or law enforcement. Help your child delete the bully from their friend list or block the bully’s username or email address.

For guidance, visit: https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/topics/protecting-kids-online

For more help, talk to Health Advocate, your health practitioner or a licensed counselor.

**National Immunization Awareness Month**

The CDC provides comprehensive information about recommended vaccinations and schedules for adults, children, pregnant women, travelers as well as up-to-date information about the COVID-19 vaccination. Visit: https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/parents-adults/resources-adults.html