

Using Medicines Wisely

MEDICINES

Almost half of all people who use medicines do not follow the directions. This causes doctor visits, hospital stays, lost pay, and changed prescriptions. All of this costs Americans \$76.6 billion each year.

Ask questions.

Ask your doctor or nurse:

- What is the medicine's name?
- Why am I taking this medicine?
- How long should I take it?
- What problems should I watch for?
- What can I do to help with problems or side effects?

Ask your pharmacist:

- When should I take this medicine?
- Should I take it on an empty stomach or with food?
- Is it safe to drink alcohol with it?
- What should I do if I forget to take it?

Read the label.

- Look at the ingredients. Do not use the medicine if you are allergic to anything in it. Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist about changing your medicine.
- Read the warnings carefully.
- Check the date the drug expires. Do not use a medicine after the date on the bottle. It may not work.

Take as directed.

- Keep your medicines organized.
- Do not skip taking your medicines.
- Do not share medicines.
- Do not take medicine in the dark. It's too easy to make a mistake.

Keep a list of the medicines you use.

- List all of your prescription medicines.
- List any over-the-counter medicines you use, too.
- Carry the list in to show your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse.

For a free copy of a brochure with a medicine tracking chart, call 1-888-878-3256.

To Learn More...

Office of Women's Health Website: www.fda.gov/womens/default.htm

FDA Website: www.fda.gov

FDA Phone: 1-888-463-6332 (1-888-INFO-FDA)