

Dear KC-CDC: My mother-in-law is taking new medicine. But she doesn't seem to know anything about why. I'm going to the doctor with her for her next visit. What questions should I be asking? What Should I Know

Dear What Should I Know: That's a good question. There are things people should do to make sure their medicine works the best it can. Make sure you **ask questions** like: Why am I using this medicine? How long should I use it? When should I start to feel better? What problems should I watch for? What should I do if I have problems or side effects? When should I use this medicine? Should I take it on an empty stomach or with food? What should I do if I forget to use it? Next, **know the medicine**: What is the brand name? Does the drug have any other names? What does the drug look like? What's its color, shape, and package. If it looks different next time, ask why. It could be the wrong medicine. Then **read the label**: Find out what is in the drug. Do not use the medicine if you are allergic to anything in it. Don't use two drugs with the same or similar ingredients. Don't use two drugs for the same problem unless your health care provider approves. Read the warnings carefully. Don't forget to **follow directions**: Do not skip taking your medicines. Do not take more than the suggested dose. Do not share medicines. Do not take medicine in the dark because it's too easy to make a mistake.

And finally, **keep a list of all the medicines** you use: List all of your prescription medicines. List any over-the-counter medicines you use. List any vitamins, minerals, herbs, amino acids, and other products you use. Carry the list with you to show your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist. If you are not feeling better or start to feel worse, call your health care provider immediately. You might need a different medicine or a different dose. For a free copy of a brochure with a place to list your medicines, call the FDA Office of Women's Health at 1-888-878-3256 or 1-888-INFO-FDA or go to www.fda.gov/womens .