

My Medications & Me: Frequently Asked Questions

- When a new medication is prescribed to you, you should be confident answering the following questions by the end of the visit:
 - **HOW** and **WHEN** should I take this medication? With or without food?
 - What am I taking this medication for?
 - How long do I take this medication?
 - Am I stopping or changing the dose of a previous medication?
 - What **side effects** should I be looking out for?
- If you don't know the answer to one of these questions:
 - **Try to ask your doctor first!**
 - If you can't talk to your doctor right away, that's okay! You can use the following to answer these questions
 - When you pick up the medication at the pharmacy, there is a **pamphlet** that comes with each medication you pick up. Make sure to **save the pamphlet** because it usually answers the common questions listed above.
 - There are also **safe online resources** that you can use to find the answers to these questions:
 - Mayo Clinic (mayoclinic.org)
 - On the website, click the "**Health Information**" tab > click "**Drugs & Supplements A-Z**" > you can either search or scroll/click through the drugs (generic or brand names), vitamins and herbal supplements (either Generic or Brand name) in alphabetical order
 - Each medication has a page that gives you information on different topics
 - Description and Brand Names
 - Before Using (considerations)
 - Proper Use
 - Precautions
 - Side Effects
 - Medline Plus (medlineplus.gov)
 - On the homepage of the website, click the "**Drugs & Supplements**" tab > You can browse by "**Drugs**" or "**Herbs and Supplements**" separately
 - On the same page, there is also an option to learn about medical management of common medical conditions (i.e. Antibiotics, Diabetes Medicines, Cold/Cough Medicine, etc) by looking on the "**Related Topics**" list.
 - Other FAQ's:
 - Why does the name of my prescription drug sound different than what the doctor said?

- It is common for doctors to refer to medications by either their **Generic** or **Brand/Trade** name, but it is the same thing. It's important and useful to know the generic and brand names of a certain drug.
 - Generic name = this is the drug's medical name, describing the active chemical in the drug. There will be only one generic name for a specific drug
 - Brand/Trade name = these are names given to a drug by companies which manufacture the drug. Individual drugs can have several different names
 - **Example:** the antidepressant with the generic name **fluoxetine** is also known by multiple trade names (*Prozac, Olena, Oxactin* and *Prozep*).
 - I saw an advertisement for a drug that treats my medical condition, is it right for me?
 - The first thing you should do is **ask your doctor!** Even though someone you know may be taking the same medication, it may not always be right for you.
 - While you wait to discuss starting a medication with your doctor, you can safely research the drug by looking up peer reviewed research articles by going to the National Library of Medicine's website "Pub Med" (pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov) and typing both the drug's name and your medical condition in the search bar.
 - When scrolling through articles, it is important to keep the following questions in mind:
 - **Population:** are the people in the study like me [**Age, sex, medical condition(s)**]
 - **Results:** The results in the research paper will show a breakdown of the effects of the drug on the participants of the study, which can include tables and graphs.
 - **Discussion/Conclusions:** The discussion and conclusion sections in the paper are opportunities for the researchers to talk about their interpretation of the results and if the effects of the drug on the participants were **significant**, including discussion of things that may influence the results outside of the direct effects of the drug. **You should take all of the information from the research with a grain of salt until you discuss this with your provider.**