

Jeni's Health & Fitness Tips

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Hi Everyone!

We are sometimes prescribed medications by a doctor without fully understanding why this has been prescribed, what side effects it may have and how it works. It is your right to understand these things and a good idea to ask questions about any medications you are taking. Many people die each year from medications they have taken and no one knows how you feel better than you do. So don't be afraid to speak up and tell your physician how you feel and ask questions.

Questions that you may want to ask are:

What is this medicine for?

Does it have any side effects?

How and when should it be taken? Do certain foods affect absorption?

What happens if I miss a dose?

How should this medication be stored?

What results can I expect from it and in what time frame?

Will it make me drowsy? Can I still drive while taking it?

How will this medication react with other medications/supplements/vitamins I am taking?

Are there any alternatives to taking this medicine? Any lifestyle changes I can make to avoid having to depend on this?

When getting your prescription filled you may like to ask the pharmacist some of the above questions too and also check if there is a generic brand which will be just as effective but more economical to purchase.

It is important that you fully understand all implications of taking medicine. Many foods have an effect on medicine absorption. For example grapefruit can have an effect on cholesterol lowering drugs. Foods containing vitamin K (asparagus, cabbage, green leafy vegetables to name a few) can reduce the effectiveness of some blood pressure and heart medications. Some anti-anxiety and anti-depressant medications can react with foods high in tyramine (cheese, yeast, smoked or pickled meats). Some medications are affected by caffeine and alcohol.

Many medications can cause drowsiness or confusion including some anti-histamines, cold and flu medications, medications for stomach cramps, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting and travel sickness and strong pain medicines. Some medicines can cause dizziness such as fluid tablets, blood pressure lowering medicines, anti-inflammatory medicines and some heart medicines.

If you experience any side effects you should contact your doctor immediately and check if you need to alter the dose, continue taking this medication or take it at another time of day.

Don't be afraid to speak up and ask questions. You have the right to know what you are taking and why. Your body belongs to you. Take care of it and it will take care of you!

Yours in health,

Jeni

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