

# Top 6 Questions to Ask Your Pharmacist

The Tennessee Pharmacists Association urges every patient in Tennessee to build a relationship with his or her pharmacist. When you get to know your pharmacist, you'll feel more comfortable asking important questions like the ones below, which will help you understand your medications and health goals, as well as anticipate how your medication therapies may affect you.

#1

What is the name of this medication, and what is it for?

Knowing the names of your medications and what they are intended to do will help you understand why you've been prescribed them as well as help your health care providers ensure you're taking the very best medications available to manage your medical conditions.

#2

When and how long am I supposed to take this medicine?

Since medications come in many different doses and dosage forms, it's important to know how to take them properly. Knowing how long you're supposed to take a medication is also important. Some medications, like antibiotics, are only supposed to be taken for a short period of time. Medications for chronic conditions, like diabetes and high blood pressure, need to be taken for a longer period of time.

#3

What are the most common side effects of this medication, and how will I know if I'm allergic to it?

It is important to know the difference between an allergic reaction to a medication and a side effect of a medication. Allergic reactions to medications can be fatal. A side effect is a reaction that may or may not be fatal but is worth being aware of and watching out for. Examples of allergic reactions are developing a rash and/or having trouble breathing after taking a medication. Examples of side effects are gastrointestinal issues, such as diarrhea or constipation, and/or a change in urine color after taking a medication.

#4

What important interactions exist with my medications that I should worry about?

Many prescription medications, over-the-counter medications, herbal supplements, and foods may interact with one another. For example, some medications should be taken on an empty stomach or taken separately from certain foods such as dairy products. Some over-the-counter pain relievers should be avoided while taking blood thinning medications like warfarin. That is why it's important to maintain an open line of communication with your pharmacist, so you can discuss your medication therapies before starting or changing them. This includes over-the-counter medications, herbal supplements, and changes in food and diet.

#5

How should I store and dispose of my medications?

Many medications have different storage requirements. Some medications should be refrigerated, while others may be kept at room temperature. Most medications require a cool, dry storage location. Therefore, it's important to avoid storing your medications in your car or bathroom, because of heat and moisture. Proper medication disposal is also very important. For instructions about how to dispose of medications, visit the FDA website at <http://bit.ly/2lv1836> or view a list of local drug drop box locations at <http://bit.ly/2kQXQGp>.

#6

What should I do if I miss a dose of my medication?

With everyone's busy lifestyle, it's very easy to miss a dose, especially with medications that you're supposed to take multiple times every day. That's why it's very important to know what to do if you miss a dose. This will help you avoid increased side effects or overdosing on a medication.

