

Safe Use of Medication

Pre-reading

Questions: How often do you use medication?
How could using medication be unsafe?



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Definitions: Chronic – lasting a long time; always present
Prescription – a written order from a doctor to use certain medicine
Pharmacist – someone who is trained and licensed to distribute medications or drugs and to advise on their use
Prerequisite – a required action that must be taken before something else can occur

Reading

16 Most people use medication at some point in their lives. There are many different types of
32 medication. Some medications are used on a long-term basis to help with a chronic condition.
49 Other medications are used for a short while to aid in recovery from an illness or injury.
62 There are many “over-the-counter” medications. These are ones that can be purchased by
78 anyone at a local drug store or pharmacy. Other medications require a prescription from a doctor.
93 Those who use medications need to be informed about what they are using. Patients should
107 ask their doctors questions about the medications that are prescribed. Pharmacists are also helpful.
117 They can answer questions about both prescription and “over-the-counter” medications.
128 There are many questions people should ask about medications. The American
134 Pharmaceutical Association offers the following list:
148 • What is the name of the medication and what is it supposed to do?
156 • When and how should the medication be taken?
162 • How long should it be taken?
173 • Does this medication include anything that could cause an allergic reaction?
180 • Should any food or alcohol be avoided?
192 • Are there medications that should not be taken at the same time?
200 • Are there any side effects of the medication?
212 • What should be done if a person forgets to take the medication?
225 • For women, is it safe to become pregnant or breastfeed with the medication?
231 • How should the medication be **stored**?
245 Medications can sometimes cause side effects. For example, a medication that helps cure an
260 infection may cause a stomach ache. Patients should always ask about **possible** side effects of
269 medications. This will help them know what to expect.
280 The packaging of medications often contains important information. Read medicine boxes
292 and bottles. Pharmacists provide helpful handouts on prescription medication. Read these, too.
307 Medications can be very helpful and even save lives. They can also be very dangerous.
322 Asking questions and reading provided information is an important prerequisite for the safe use of
323 medication.

Understanding

1. What is “over-the-counter” medication? _____

2. Why do people use medications? _____

3. Who could a person talk with about medication questions? _____

4. What does the word **possible** mean? _____

5. Define “side effect.” _____

6. Why might a person use a medication that has side effects? _____

7. What are things people should know about the medications they are using? (List at least three.) _____

8. What does the word **stored** mean in this reading? _____

Writing

Option A: Summarize the reading in your own words.

Option B: Describe a conversation you have had with doctors or pharmacists about medications.

Option C: Write about your good or bad medication experiences.
