

## Simple Steps to Medication Management

### Why Manage Your Medications? Because Your Health is at Stake.

Medications have the power to make you feel better or save your life. They can also kill you if you take them incorrectly. Their power for good only works if you take them as prescribed.

No matter how smart you are, keeping track of your medications can be confusing. Which of these applies to you?

- More than one doctor prescribes your medications.
- Your doctors often change your medications.
- You must take each medication at different times, some with food, some without food, etc.
- Sometimes you forget whether you've taken a medication.
- Sometimes you forget to refill a prescription.

It doesn't have to be so confusing. With preparation, you can manage your medications more easily and safely.

### 4 Steps to Manage Your Medications

#### 1. Make a "medicine chest."

Any job is easier if your tools are handy. Find a box to be your "medicine chest." In the box keep:

- a pen and pad of paper
- all of your prescriptions, over-the-counter medicines, and vitamins you take regularly
- a bag containing the medicines you take only as needed
- your Medication List

#### 2. Keep an up-to-date Medication List.

Your Medication List includes:

- both prescription and over-the-counter medicines
- each medicine's dosage and the times you take it
- medicines you take as needed

At every medical appointment, ask the doctor to update your list.

Jane Doe	updated
Medication List	9-3-2013
<u>Daily Medications</u>	
Fluoxetine	60 mg/day
Take 3 20mg. tabs in A.M.	
Naproxen	220 mg/day
Take 1 tab in A.M.	
Aspirin	81 mg/day
Take 1 tab in A.M.	
Lisinopril	20 mg/day
Take 1 tab in A.M.	
<u>AS NEEDED</u>	
Oxycodone	10 mg
Take 1 tab every 8 hrs. for pain.	
Not to exceed 3 per day	
Diphenhydramine (Benadryl)	25 mg
Take 1 capsule every 6 hrs. for itching.	
Maximum 4 per day.	

### 3. Use a pill organizer.

With a pill organizer:

- You only have to open each bottle once a week. The rest of the time, you take all the pills for one time of day by opening one lid on the pill organizer.
- It's easy to see if you took your pills.

You can find pill organizers at your drug or grocery store. Choose one with at least two **large** sections per day. Large sections will be easier to open and fill.

### 4. Fill your pill organizer once a week.

Do this task when you will not be interrupted. Gather your tools. You will need your pill organizer, medicine chest, and Medication List.

Leave any medications you take "as needed" in their bag in your medicine chest. Your pill organizer is only for medicine you take daily.

First: If necessary, update your Medication List.

Second: **Open** the first pill bottle. Following the directions on the label, **fill** your pill organizer with that medicine. **Close** the pill bottle.

**Write** down notes about that medicine such as:

- a reminder to get more of it
- questions to ask your doctor
- problems or side effects it may have caused

Now repeat that process with the next medication bottle: **Open, Fill, Close, Write.**

**Remember, open only one pill bottle at a time.**



**When This is a Habit, Medication Management Will be Much Easier.**

Now put your pill organizer where you will see it when you need to take your medicine.

Put your notes where they will remind you to call the doctor or re-order medications.

Put your Medication List back in your medicine chest (and always carry a copy in your wallet).

Best of all, put your medicine chest *away*. You won't have to fuss with all those bottles for another week.

If you think this system won't work for you, ask for help. If you don't have a family member or neighbor who can help, call Care Transitions Northwest at (888) 801-3049.