

Prescription Safety

Approximately 23.1% of American adults take three or more prescription medications regularly. That figure jumps to 36% for ages 45-64 and 67% for ages 65+. Taking multiple medications can lead to confusion, improper use, and potentially adverse drug reactions resulting in injury or death.

Adverse drug reactions can occur from an overdose, prolonged or incorrect administration of drugs, improper combination of two or more prescriptions, negative food interactions with medicine, and allergic reactions.

Individuals increase their risk of adverse drug reactions when they use multiple doctors or pharmacies, or when they take multiple prescriptions to treat various conditions at the same time. Having poor vision and dexterity can also increase the risk of adverse reactions.



PLAY
IT SAFE

KNOW
THE
DANGERS

If you suspect an overdose, dial 911 or call Poison Help at 1-800-222-1222.

Measures you can take to increase prescription safety:

- Bring a detailed list of all drugs and supplements to doctor appointments.
- Ask your doctor and pharmacist if you are taking a medication that might put you at risk for a food-drug interaction or if you suspect a drug allergy.
- Always read the label and follow instructions, never change dosage, and always take medication with the lights on.
- Never share medication or take medicine prescribed for someone else.
- Store medications in original containers, climate-controlled environment (cool, low moisture), and away from food and household chemicals.
- Keep medications (including over-the-counter medicine and supplements) out of reach of children and always ensure that the cap is tightly fastened.

Food-Drug Interactions

It is estimated that 62.5% of patients take medication improperly with respect to meals. Use extra caution if you are on any of the following:

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| ▪ Blood thinners (anti-coagulants) | ▪ Cardiac drugs |
| ▪ Diabetic drugs | ▪ Pain meds |
| ▪ Anti-seizure drugs | ▪ Statins for cholesterol |
| ▪ Asthma meds | ▪ Antibiotics |

References:

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3. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/abus/abus16.pdf#079>
4. https://www.cdc.gov/medicationsafety/program_focus_activities.html
5. <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/data/overdose.html>
6. Boyd, CM; Darer, J; Boulton, C; Fried, LP; Boulton, L; Wu, AW (2005). "Clinical practice guidelines and quality of care for older patients with multiple comorbid diseases: Implications for pay for performance." JAMA. 294 (6): 716-24. PMID 16091574. doi:10.1001/jama.294.6.716.
7. Haider, SI; Johnell, K; Thorslund, M; Fastbom, J (2007). "Analysis of the association between polypharmacy and socioeconomic position among elderly aged >=77 years in Sweden." Clin Ther. 30 (2): 419-27. PMID 18343279. doi:10.1016/j.clinthera.2008.02.010.