

Caregiver's Corner



Medication Management for the At-Home Caregiver

Personal Medication Record — Why Have One?

How many times has it happened to you or your loved one? You are asked by your doctor, pharmacist, or other professional caregiver, “What medication are you on?” or “When do you take it?” or “Do you remember the dosage?” — and you give an answer that you *think* is right, but you’re just not sure.

A properly kept medication record will track prescription medications, over-the-counter (OTC) medications, and vitamins and herbal supplements. In addition to being able to answer simple questions about medications by knowing exactly what medications are current, a “Personal Medication Record” offers several benefits.

Safety and Effectiveness. Good prescribing depends on a good medication record. The doctor needs to understand the complete medication regimen, including herbal supplements and OTC drugs.

Accuracy. The medication record should reflect all medications, dosages, and reactions to them. It should also include drugs tried in the past that did not work in one way or another, including drugs allergies.

Completeness. Much of today’s medical care is provided by specialists, requiring the need for one patient to see multiple doctors. Some people use multiple pharmacies to fill their prescriptions. A medication record makes sense so the patient is able to present the complete medication regimen to any doctor or pharmacist who needs it.

Access. By putting medication information in writing, you can keep it with you at all times. This gives you access to medication information when you are separated from the prescription bottles.



Where Should the Record be Kept?

- ✓ *With anyone who may need to use it, such as patient, family member, or caregiver*
- ✓ *At home*
- ✓ *At Work*
- ✓ *Carry one with you at all times*

Anytime you expect to be asked for a medication history, having it written down reduces the problems of trying to remember all those medicines when you may be distracted or nervous. It is very important to take a personal medication record with you to the hospital, doctor, dentist, therapist, or pharmacy. Having such a form on hand will also help any other family, friends or caregivers who help with the medication regimen.

Remember, good communication between health care professionals regarding the medications being taken is important. You can help in this process by understanding the importance of keeping records and sharing the information appropriately.



When Should You Use Your Record?

- ✓ Hospital, ER and Urgent Care visits
- ✓ Doctor appointments
- ✓ Dental appointments
- ✓ Therapy appointments
- ✓ When prescriptions are filled
- ✓ Change in caregivers
- ✓ Nursing facility admission