

# How to Take and Manage Your Medications



**New York State**  
**Office for People with Developmental Disabilities**

Andrew M. Cuomo, *Governor*  
Kerry A. Delaney, *Acting Commissioner*

# Questions To Ask Yourself Before Taking Your Medication



Reviewing the following questions with your health care provider, pharmacist, or circle of support will make it easier to take your medications correctly and become more independent.

-  **Do I know what medications I take?**
-  **Is my list of medications correct?**
-  **Do I know when and how to take my medications?**
-  **Do I need help organizing my medications?**
-  **Can I open the bottle by myself?**
-  **Is the form of medication (i.e., pill , liquid, tablet, capsule) easy for me to take?**
-  **Do I have other people who know about my medications and can assist me if I have questions?**

The answers to these questions will help you decide how much help you need in taking your medications.

# Check These Things Every Time You Take Your Medication



Is this my medication?



Am I taking the right amount of medication?  
For example, 25mg.



Am I following the directions for my medications? For example, two pills in the morning or 1 drop in each eye.



Is it the right time of day (morning, afternoon, or bedtime)?



Am I taking it the right way? For example, "Do Not Chew."

The label on your medication contains all of the information necessary to take the medication correctly.

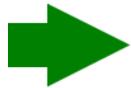
<b>Local Area Pharmacy</b>	Local Area Pharmacy 100 Any Street Anytown, New York	Dr. Jane Doe <b>Phone: (555)-555-5555</b>
NO <b>4787612-84410</b>		DATE: 10/05/2014
<b>JANE SMITH</b> 456 Any Street, Anytown, USA 11111		
<b>TAKE ONE CAPSULE BY MOUTH THREE TIMES DAILY FOR 10 DAYS UNTIL ALL TAKEN</b>		
DRUG NAME 500MG CAPSULES QTY MRG		
<b>NO REFILLS - DR. AUTHORIZATION REQUIRED</b>		
 <b>DO NOT CHEW OR CRUSH, SWALLOW WHOLE.</b>		USE BEFORE 12/05/2014 SLF/SLF

# Using Only One Pharmacy is Best

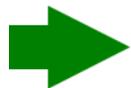
Using the same pharmacy will help keep you safe because it helps your pharmacist keep track of all your medications. It will also help you get to know your pharmacist.



**Keeps track of all medications you take**



**Reviews your prescription for accuracy**



**Reviews your medications to see that they work well together**



**Makes sure you are not taking more medications than you need**



**Can put medication in easy open pill containers**



**Answers any questions you have concerning your medications**



# Questions You Might Ask Your Pharmacist

- ➔ **How should I store my medications?**
- ➔ **What are the side effects?**
- ➔ **What should I do if I am having a side effect to my medication?**
- ➔ **Do I take my medication with or without food?**
- ➔ **Are there any foods or drinks I should avoid?**
- ➔ **What should I do if I forget a dose of medication?**
- ➔ **Are there any over-the-counter medications, vitamins, or herbs that I should not take with my medications?**



You should feel comfortable asking your pharmacist questions about your medications.

# Important **Do's** of Storing Medication Safely

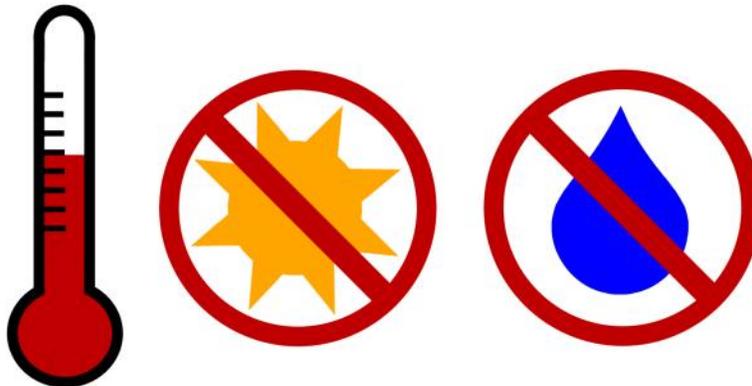
**DO** store medication in a cool, dry place away from heat and sunlight

**DO** store medication in original containers - the amber bottle protects the medication from light

**DO** keep your medication separate from other people in the household

**DO** keep creams, ointments and eye drops separate from other household items

**DO** ask your pharmacist if you have any questions on storing your medication safely



Store your medications in a cool,  
dry place away from sunlight.

# Important **Don'ts** of Storing Medication Safely

**DON'T** store medication in the bathroom – the dampness and heat can change how it works for you

**DON'T** mix different pills in the same bottle – you might take the wrong one

**DON'T** share your medication with anyone else

**DON'T** leave medication in places that children or pets can easily get to

**DON'T** Keep your medication in the refrigerator, unless told to do so by your health care provider, pharmacist, or instructions on your medication bottle



Don't store your medications in a bathroom because they can be affected by heat and humidity.

# Technology To Help You Take Your Medication

There are different devices that can help organize your medications as well as help you remember to take them.



**Automatic pill-dispensers can help you take the right amount of medication at the right time.**



**Smartphone and tablet apps can alert you when it's time to take your medication.**

## Did You Know?

You can get a tablet splitter, ask the pharmacy to pre-split pills, ask for an inhaler assisted device, or ask for a cream/ointment applicator.

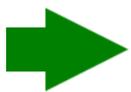
There are many options to organize your medications, ask your pharmacist.



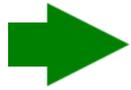
# **How Do I know Which Technologies Are Right For Me?**



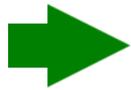
Here are some things to consider when looking for devices to assist you in taking your medications:



**Can I use this device by myself or do I need someone to help me use it or show me how to use it?**



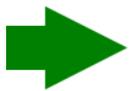
**Is this device easy to use?**



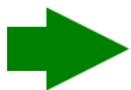
**Is this device easy to take care of?**



**Is this device safe? Are there possible health hazards to using the technology incorrectly?**



**Does it break easily? Is it going to last? For how long?**



**Can I take it with me wherever I go?**



**Is the device affordable? Does my insurance cover this device and/or can I apply for help to pay for this?**

# Getting Your Medication Refilled

You should be able to answer the following questions in order to make sure that you don't run out of medication and that you can get your medication refilled. If you don't know the answers to these questions, contact your health care provider, pharmacist, or circle of support.



**Do I know how to refill my medication before it runs out?**



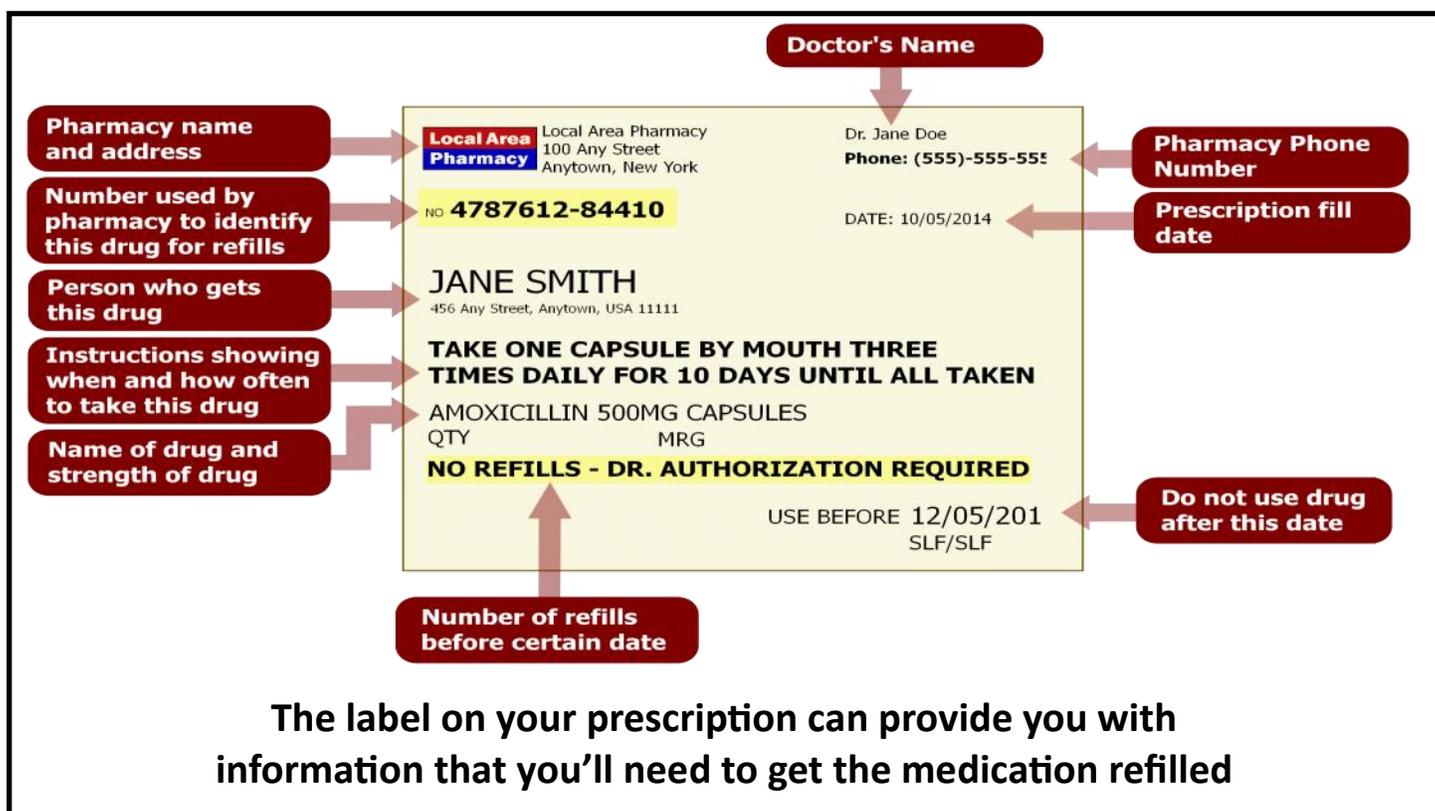
**Do I know to contact my health care provider's office if I do not have any refills left at the pharmacy for my medication?**



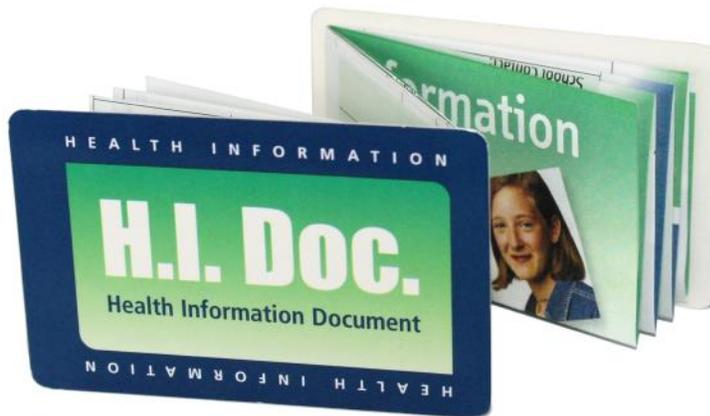
**Do I know if my pharmacy offers an automatic reminder service to get refills?**



**Do I have a way to track when my medications run out?**



# What is H.I. Doc?

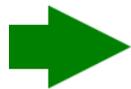
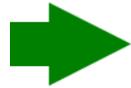
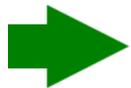


H.I. Doc<sup>®</sup> is an easy-to-carry document that contains your health information. You should keep your H.I. Doc<sup>®</sup> up-to-date and carry it with you at all times. You should share your H.I. Doc<sup>®</sup> with your health care provider at every visit.

If you need help filling out your H.I. Doc<sup>®</sup>, ask your health care provider (doctor, nurse practitioner, physician assistant) to assist you.

You can get a free H.I. Doc<sup>®</sup> by going to the NYS Department of Health website, [www.health.ny.gov/community/special\\_needs/](http://www.health.ny.gov/community/special_needs/) or sending an email to [B0019W@health.state.ny.us](mailto:B0019W@health.state.ny.us)

## H.I. Doc let's you keep track of:

-  **Your contact information**
-  **All of your medications and pharmacy information and other important information**
-  **Your list of doctors and their phone numbers**
-  **The name of someone who is allowed to discuss your medication information with your doctor**

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## **DISCLAIMER**

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