

# What Do I Need To Know About My Prescription Drugs?

## **Is my pharmacist required to give me information about my prescriptions?**

Yes. When you receive a new prescription, the pharmacist is required to verbally counsel you about the prescription and also provide you written information about the prescription drug. The pharmacist may provide you with information such as:

- the name and description of the drug;
- dosage form, route of administration, and duration of therapy;
- special directions and precautions;
- common severe side or adverse effects or interactions that may be encountered;
- techniques for self-monitoring of drug therapy;
- proper storage;
- refill information; and
- action to be taken in the event of a missed dose.

Pharmacists may also provide additional information when they believe that the information is necessary and in your best interest.

In addition, every pharmacy is required to make available to you a patient reference, which provides written information designed for the consumer about prescription drugs. This reference must be easily accessible to all consumers in the pharmacy.

## **Are there any questions I should be asking about my prescription drugs?**

YES! The National Council on Patient Information and Education (NCPPIE), a patient education coalition of nearly 200 organizations (including the Texas State Board of Pharmacy), reports up to 50% of all prescriptions fail to work because they are used improperly. As a result, preventable medicine-related illnesses annually account for over \$75 billion in doctor's visits, unnecessary prescriptions, absences and loss of productivity at work; increased emergency room visits, hospitalizations, nursing home admissions, and death. In fact, NCPPIE reports, it

is estimated that adverse drug reactions are the 4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in the U.S.

The U.S. Pharmacopeia (USP), an organization providing official standards for drug products and authoritative information on medicines, dietary supplements and other health care products, lists the following questions you should ask about your medicines.

- What are the brand and generic names of the medicine?
- What is the medicine suppose to do?
- How should I use the medicine?
  - By mouth?
  - In the eye or ear?
  - On the skin?
  - Other
- What should I do if I miss a dose?
- When should I expect the medicine to begin to work?
- How will I know if the medicine is working?
- What should I do if the medicine doesn't seem to work?
- What side effects should I watch for?
  - How long will they last?
  - What should I do if they occur?
  - How can I lessen the side effects?
- While using the medicine, should I avoid:
  - Driving?
  - Drinking alcohol?

- Eating certain foods?
- Taking certain medicines?
- Are there any other precautions?
- How should I store the medicine?
- Can I get a refill?
- Are there special instructions about how to use the medicine?

It is important that you be informed about the prescription drugs you are taking and that you take them properly. Your pharmacist can help by providing you with information about prescription drugs.