Medicine Safety: A Toolkit for Families

Questions to Ask Your Health Team

Here are some questions you might want to ask your family's healthcare providers about the medicines you and each member of your family take. Write down any other questions you have ahead of time and bring them to your appointment. Be sure to bring a notepad to record the answers so that you won't have to rely on your memory.

1. What is the name of the medicine and what is it supposed to do? Can you write it down or spell it for me?

2. Is this the brand name or the generic version? Is a generic version of this medicine available?

3. Why did you choose this particular medicine?

4. Is this medicine safe for me/my kids?

5. Will this medication affect other medical conditions that affect me/my children/parents (for example, glaucoma, emphysema)?

6. How soon should I/we expect the medicine to begin to work? How will I know if it's working?

7. How and when should I take this medicine/give it to my kids, and for how long?

8. Are any monitoring tests required with this medication (for example, to check liver or kidney functions)?

9. Will I/we need a refill? Do we need to schedule a follow-up visit?

10. Are there certain foods, drinks, supplements, other medicines or activities (for example, smoking, driving, sun exposure) I should avoid while taking this medicine? Will the medicine affect my sleep?

11. What are the possible side effects I should look out for? How can I prevent them?

12. Can you review the prescription drugs, OTC medications and supplements I/my children are taking to see whether any are unnecessary?

13. Are there certain medications I should avoid if I'm pregnant, planning to become pregnant or breastfeeding?

14. How and under what conditions should I/my children stop taking a medicine? Can I stop taking the medicine if I start to feel better?

15. What if I/my child miss a dose?

16. How should I store this medicine?

17. Do you have the ability to e-prescribe (sending prescriptions by computer directly to the pharmacy)?