

Common Questions to Ask Your Healthcare Providers about Medications

General Medication Information – What is it?

What is the name of the medication (brand name or generic)?

What is the dosage of the medication?

What is this medication for? Why am I taking it?

What does it do for my body? What is the intended effect?

Is this a temporary or long-term medication?

What is the expected outcome and when will I see the outcome?

Are there other medications that can be used for the same symptoms? What alternatives are there to this medication?

Where can I find more information on this medication?

Will there be a follow-up appointment specific to this medication?

Are other people with spinal cord injury/dysfunction taking this medication?

Am I able to get a second opinion about taking this medication for [reason it is suggested]?

How long has the medication been on the market (in North America, in Europe, etc.)?

What medications have been around for a while for [reason it is suggested]?

Can I change between the generic and brand name of this medication?

What are the safety considerations (including if pregnant, breastfeeding, or planning on becoming pregnant, allergies, physiological changes, and operation of motorized machinery)?

Medication Administration – How do I take it?

How do I take this medication? Does it need to be taken under specific conditions (i.e., with or without food, morning or evening, as needed, routine, multiple times per day)?

What is the best route of administration that aligns with my abilities (oral, injection, inhalation, rectal, etc.)?

How long will I need to take this medication?

What might I do if I miss a dose of the medication?

What might I do if I take too much medication?

What happens if I take my medication and vomit?

What happens if I take my medication and have diarrhea?

Is there another way to take this medication?

When stopping a medication that needs to have the dose tapered, what is the process of weaning off this medication?

When should I ask my healthcare provider to discuss if the medication can be stopped or have the dose reduced?

What are the lifestyle changes that may need to occur when taking specific medications (e.g., driving, exercising)?

Medication Effectiveness – How effective is it?

How will I know if this medication is working?

How long will I need to take this medication before I should see results?

If this medication is no longer working, can I change the dose or change to a different medication?

Medication Side Effects and Safety – What are the possible risks?

What are the expected side effects (short term and long term)?

How do I track side effects?

What are the steps to take if side effects occur (including common, uncommon, and severe)?

Which side effects warrant emergency medical attention?

Can I stop this medication if the side effects are intolerable?

Does this medication have any contraindications?

Will this medication interact with any of my other medications?

Note: make sure to tell your pharmacy team what other medications (including prescription medications, over-the-counter medications, and natural health products) you are taking

What are the steps to take if a medication interaction occurs?

What are the negative and positive effects (risks/benefits) of taking the medication on a frequent basis?

Is there an alternative to this medication with potentially fewer side effects?

Will I experience withdrawal effects if I stop this medication? How do I manage the withdrawal effects?

Convenience – What is the cost?

What is the cost of this medication?

Can this medication be covered by my insurance or publicly funded drug program?

Medication Packaging – How will it be packaged?

How the medication will be packaged (e.g., easy to open container)

Possibility of medication being packaged in a blister pack (pre-filled plastic packaging)

Medication Refills and Renewals – What if I need more?

Number of refills

Process for refilling the medication (steps to follow, available options)

Process for renewing the prescription for the medication (steps to follow, available options)

Communication about Medications – What if I have questions?

Annual medication reviews from your pharmacist and/or prescriber

Speak with your pharmacist and/or prescriber

Ask for written information from your healthcare provider