UNDERSTANDING YOUR PRESCRIPTION LABEL

A Tool Developed by SAMHSA's Program to Achieve Wellness | paw@prainc.com | 1.800.850.2523

Understanding what information is on your prescription label and what that information means can help you lead a safer and healthier life. Plus, knowing about your prescription medications can help you feel more comfortable engaging with your provider and pharmacist.

This tool is designed to help you learn the label on your prescriptions so you can avoid prescription misuse and safely take your medications. This tool is for illustration only and should not be referred to for individual medical advice. For questions about your prescriptions, contact your provider.

When reading the prescription label, it's important to understand the **general information** for that particular medication. Look for these 5 items on your prescription label.

1. patient's name
2. prescription number
3. name and location of the pharmacy
4. pharmacy phone number
5. name of the doctor who prescribed the medication and the date the medication was prescribed

2 Prescription Number

This is a unique and personal code assigned to your medicine. Give this number to the pharmacy when you need a refill.

3 Pharmacy Name and Address

This is where you picked up the prescription, and where you can go with any questions or concerns about the medication.

4 Pharmacy Phone Number

Call this number if you have a question about your medicine.

5 Prescribing Doctor and Date Prescribed

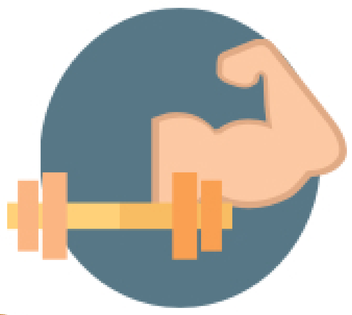
Be sure to contact your doctor with concerns; including questions about instructions, dosage, and side effects. Never make adjustments without talking to your doctor.

1 Patient's Name

Only use prescriptions with your name on them. Taking a drug not prescribed to you is drug misuse.

When reading the prescription label, it's also important to understand the **medical information** for that particular medication. Look for these 7 items on your prescription label.

6. instructions on how and when to take the medicine
7. the quantity or number of pills/tablets in the prescription
8. the number of refills allowed
9. the name of the medicine
10. any warnings or things to avoid
11. the expiration date
12. the prescribed dosage



6 Prescription Instructions

Follow closely! Be sure to ask your pharmacist if you have questions about timing.

12 Dosage

The size and strength of the medicine. Remember, dosages are different for each person. If you feel you need to stop or change dosage, talk to your doctor. Never adjust it on your own!

7 Number of Pills/Tablets

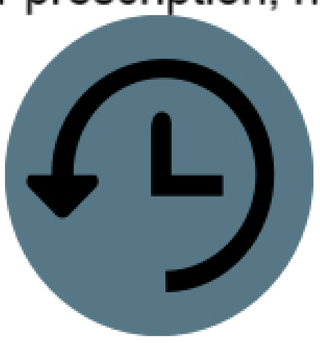
Make sure you have the appropriate amount of tablets in the prescription bottle. Knowing how many pills come with a prescription can allow you to keep track of how much you are taking and how many pills you should have left.

11 Expiration Date

Medicine cannot be used after this date. Be sure to properly discard expired prescriptions.

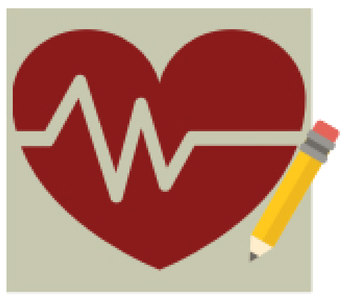
8 Number of Prescription Refills Available

Be sure to get the amount of refills (Ref:) indicated on the prescription. You can refill your prescription by contacting the pharmacy and providing the RX, or prescription, number.



9 Name of Medicine

Try to keep track of which medicines you are taking so you can easily share that information with your doctor and pharmacist! Sometimes, the label will include:
a) pharmaceutical name and
b) generic brand name.



10 Warnings

Pay Attention!
Warnings can tell you: what activities or substances to stay away from while taking your medication and what the possible side effects are.

WARNING: The label is for illustration purposes only. This label should not be referenced for medical advice. For questions regarding your prescriptions, please contact your doctor or pharmacist.

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http://www.samhsa.gov/wellness-initiative/program-achieve-wellness

Sources
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