

# *Disability Campaign.org*

## Medications ... Read the Label

Pharmacists are specialized medical professionals for good reason. Using a prescription medication or an over-the-counter drug can be confusing. Rule number one: always take the time to read carefully the label before using the medication. Reading the label carefully will help you to use the medicine safely and effectively, just as the Pharmacists intended when they wrote it.



### *How to Read Your Over-the-Counter Medicine Label:*

1. **Active Ingredient.** This is the ingredient(s) that makes the medicine work.
2. **Purpose.** This section tells you the intended purpose, the treatment type, of the medicine. Only use medicine for its intended purpose.
3. **Uses.** Make certain that your symptoms match the symptoms listed on the label.
4. **Warnings.** There are many times or conditions in which you should not take certain medicines. Common warnings are addressed to those who are taking multiple medicines, pregnant or nursing mothers, and people with heart or liver issues.
5. **Directions.** This section of the label tells you exactly when and how to take the medicine. Unless your healthcare professional instructs you otherwise, you should never take the medicine more often or longer than the label indicates.

6. **Other Information.** Storage information is usually placed in this section. Most medicine should be kept in a cool, dry place. All medicine should be kept out of the sight and reach of children.
7. **Inactive Ingredients.** Medicines almost always have inactive ingredients in addition to the active ingredient(s). Carefully read this section to make sure that you are not allergic to any of these ingredients.

*How to Read Your Prescription Medicine Label:*

1. **Warnings.** Always read the warning before taking the medicine. Plan your daily activities to account for the effects that the medicine will have on your body.
2. **Expiration Date.** Do not take medicine after its expiration date. This is for your safety.
3. **Description.** Prescription labels should have a visual description of the pill or tablet.
4. **Pharmacy Information.** This section is very important. Contact your pharmacist with any questions you may have regarding the medicine.
5. **Name and Address.** Prescription medications are prescribed for one person, and one person only. Read the information carefully to make sure that your name, your address, and your phone number are correctly printed.
6. **Directions.** Follow these directions carefully so that you take the medicine in the correct amount and frequency as directed by your pharmacist.
7. **Ingredients.** This section will inform you of the active ingredients, the ingredients that make the medicine work.
8. **Quantity and Refill.** Take note of how much medicine is in your container and how many refills you have remaining. If you will be needing refills, plan and contact your pharmacy before you've already run out so that you do not have a lapse in your medication regiment.

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