

Taking a Look at Your Medications



At TRICOR Insurance, we work with hundreds of public and private employers and their employees on their employee benefits programs with a strong focus on their health plan. A great deal of detail is put into creating the best value for those programs to help them be as affordable and strong as possible. Within an employer-based health plan is the prescription drug plan or RX plan. This area continues to be a significant part of the overall health plan both in utilization and cost. This article focuses on the use of those RX coverages and, specifically, the health and safety aspect of those benefits within one's health plan.

Taking medication may seem like a rather routine task to most because the instructions are on the container. While that's true, there is more to the safe and effective use of drugs than what is simply on the label.

Get the Facts

We all should know what our medications are supposed to do for us and what they are not. We also need to know whether there are particular times and procedures for taking medications. Our health practitioners are the best source of information, so be sure to ask the right questions to get all the facts you need. Please consider the following:

What side effects may occur, and should I report them?

Should I avoid taking the medication with certain foods or drinks?

What should I do if I miss a dose?

How can I recognize an allergic reaction to the drug?

How long will it take the medicine to start working?

Is a certain time of day best for taking this medication?

Should I take it before or after eating, or with food?

How long should I continue to take this drug?

Should I avoid the sun or any specific activities while taking this medication?

May I continue taking my other medications while I am on this drug? If so, can I take them all together?

Would the generic version be an acceptable alternative?

Make it Easy on Yourself

For some other points to consider for the safety and ease of taking prescribed medication, please review the following:

- Shake liquid medication thoroughly before each dose.
- Drink some water to lubricate your throat before taking a pill.
- Use a measuring spoon (often provided), not a regular kitchen spoon, for liquid medication.
- Use a checklist or organizing drug container if you need to take multiple drugs at different times each day.

- Keep all medications out of reach of children, and do not store in direct sunlight, the freezer, humid and hot conditions, and especially hot automobiles.
- Keep all medications in their original containers to avoid mistakes.
- Do not mix capsules or tablets into food without consulting your doctor.
- Refrain from drinking alcohol while taking prescription medications.
- Consult your doctor before taking any drugs if you are pregnant, planning to get pregnant, or if you are breastfeeding.

For a great reference about safe and effective use of prescription medications, visit this link:

<https://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/BuyingUsingMedicineSafely/default.htm>

Interesting Statistics on Medications and RX Programs with your Health Plan?

Unfortunately, nearly three out of every four American consumers report not always taking their prescription medicine as directed. A recent survey commissioned by the National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA) also found a major disconnect between consumers’ beliefs and their behaviors when it comes to taking medicines correctly. Some of the findings of the survey include:

- Almost half of those polled (49%) said they had forgotten to take a prescribed medicine;
- Nearly one-third (31%) had not filled a prescription they were given;
- Nearly three out of 10 (29%) had stopped taking a medicine before the supply ran out; and
- Almost one-quarter (24%) had taken less than the recommended dosage.

Source: “Enhancing Prescription Medicine Adherence: A National Action Plan,” National Council on Patient Information and Education; posted at <http://www.bemedwise.org/>.

Important Disclaimer: This article is for informational purposes only and is not intended as medical advice. For further information, please consult a medical professional. We strongly recommend school districts connecting with their licensed benefits consultant/broker, legal professional and dedicated wellness vendor for support and guidance as it relates to their employee benefits programs or refinement to existing programs.



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