

MANAGING COMPLEX MEDICATION REGIMENS



ONE MEDICATION LIST CAN PROTECT YOU FROM MISTAKES AND SIDE EFFECTS

WHY MEDICATION SAFETY MATTERS

- Multiple medications—including prescriptions, OTC drugs, and supplements—can help your health but increase the risk of mistakes and side effects, especially for adults 50+
- Aging changes how your body processes medications; doses that worked before may feel too strong now
- Side effects can mimic general decline: dizziness, confusion, fatigue, stomach issues, bruising, or balance problems
- Risk is highest after hospital, ER, rehab, or specialist visits, when medication lists often change

PRACTICING MEDICATION SAFETY

- **Keep one accurate medication list** — include every prescription, over-the-counter medication, vitamin, or supplement, with dose, timing, reason for taking it, allergies, and past reactions
- **Share your list with caregivers** — having it on your phone or in writing is invaluable in a crisis
- **Centralize your pharmacy** — using one pharmacy helps catch interactions or duplicate prescriptions
- **Plan for changes** — whenever medications are added or changed, do a full review to ensure there are no conflicts with your current regimen
- **Organize your medications** — use a pillbox, compartments, or a system that fits your daily life; label bottles with reminders like “Take at night,” “With food,” or “May cause drowsiness”



MEDICATION CHANGES DESERVE A FULL REVIEW, ESPECIALLY AFTER HOSPITAL OR ER VISITS

MEDICATION SAFETY CHECKLIST

Checklist	Notes
Do a “brown bag” review once or twice a year Bring all medications, vitamins, and supplements to your doctor or pharmacist for review	
Ask four key questions for every new medication: 1. What is this for? 2. How and when do I take it? (morning/night, with/without food) 3. What side effects require an urgent call to my provider? 4. When will we recheck if it’s working or can it be stopped?	
Watch for medications that increase fall risk Sleep aids, anxiety medications, muscle relaxers, strong pain medications, and some allergy medications	
Be aware of supplements “Natural” does not always mean safe; they can interact with prescriptions and cause serious side effects	
Speak up If something feels off, ask questions. You’re not being difficult; you’re being safe	
Review your medication list after any hospital, ER, or rehab visit Even small changes can have big effects	