

In Sound Health

Medication Management: Tips for Safe and Effective Use

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Medication Management: Tips for Safe and Effective Use

Medications play a crucial role in managing health and treating illnesses, but improper use can have serious consequences. Studies show that four out of ten older adults who take multiple medications do not adhere to their prescriptions as directed. However, medication adherence can be an issue for people of any age. To ensure your medications work effectively and safely, follow these key guidelines.

1. Ask Questions

Understanding your medications and how to take them is crucial. When prescribed a new medicine, make sure to ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist:

- What is the name and active ingredient of the medicine?
- What is its purpose and the correct dosage?
- What does it look like and when does it expire?
- Are there any side effects or warnings?
- Can it be taken during pregnancy or breastfeeding (if applicable)?
- Are there any interactions with other medicines or foods?

2. Keep a Medicine List

Maintain a comprehensive list of all your medications, including prescriptions, over-the-counter drugs, and supplements. Keep this list with you and update it regularly. Share it with your doctor, nurse, and pharmacist to ensure everyone is aware of what you're taking. This will help avoid potential interactions and errors.

3. Follow Directions

Strictly adhere to the instructions provided with your medication. Taking too much or too little can be harmful.

- Read the label carefully and follow the prescribed dosage.
- Never skip doses or stop taking medication without consulting your healthcare provider.
- Avoid taking medicine in the dark or without proper identification to prevent mistakes.
- Check expiration dates regularly and avoid using expired medications.
- Use a pill organizer to keep track of your daily doses and avoid missed or duplicated doses.

Sources: [fda.gov](https://www.fda.gov), [nia.nih.gov](https://www.nia.nih.gov)



Falling For Health: Tips For a Better You

September 2024

As the leaves change color and the weather gets colder, autumn offers a perfect opportunity to refocus on your health and well-being. Celebrate the change of season by reinforcing positive habits and integrating new ones into your routine.

In this edition of *In Sound Health*, discover essential advice for taking medications correctly and hear from Guardian Nurses about how they can guide you on your health journey. Invest in your future with preventive care strategies and simple steps to lower your diabetes risk. Plus, treat yourself to a cozy meal with a Spaghetti Squash Alfredo recipe, and don't miss out on ghoulishly good workouts with LiveWell Fit events. As you embrace self-care and healthy habits this fall, remember that Sound Support programs are always here to support you on your path to well-being.

Filling Your Prescription

Below is an example of information that you will typically see on a prescription label. Your prescription label may have a different format than the one shown, but the prescription number is usually printed in the upper left corner of the label.

Pharmacy Address, USA		Pharmacy name, address, and phone number
Dr. J. Smith	8/11/2014	Doctor's name and date filled
Rx#: 636226		Prescription number
Jane Doe Main Street, USA		Patient's name and address
Name of medicine 10 mg tablet		Medication name and dose
Take 1 capsule by mouth every day		How to take the medication
Refills: 3	Quantity: 30	Number of refills and quantity per container
Discard after 7/11/2025		Date medication should no longer be taken

Doctors and pharmacists often use abbreviations or terms that may not be familiar to you. Here is an explanation of some of the most common abbreviations you will see on labels of your prescription medications:

- Rx means “prescription”
- prn means “as needed”
- qd means “every day,” bid means “twice a day,” tid means “three times a day,” qid means “four times a day”
- ac means “before meals,” pc means “after meals”
- hs means “at bedtime”
- po means “by mouth”
- ea means “each”

Ask your pharmacist to explain any terms or abbreviations on your prescription medication label that you don't understand.



Time is running out to earn maximum HRA funding for 2025

Spend 15 minutes taking your confidential annual health assessment by the Sept. 30 deadline to unlock maximum HRA funding for 2025.

Get a snapshot of your health

The annual health assessment is a quick, simple, confidential questionnaire that gives you an immediate snapshot of your current health and health risks and gives you a personal plan for healthy living. Depending on your results, you may qualify for a variety of Sound Support programs.

Avoid a higher deductible in 2025

Taking the annual health assessment can help you avoid a higher deductible next year by earning a significant amount of funding for your 2025 Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) account.

Don't wait – scan here to get started:



**Final earned amount depends on the other Health Related Actions you perform this year. Must be HRA eligible on January 1, 2025.*

Reduce Your Risk: Diabetes Defense Tips

Type 2 diabetes is a chronic condition that affects millions worldwide, but it is often preventable. While certain factors like genetics and age are unavoidable, you can still significantly reduce your risk by making certain lifestyle changes.

Here are some tips to take control of your health:



Stay Active: Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise like brisk walking or swimming each week. Add in some weightlifting or yoga sessions 2-3 times weekly to boost insulin sensitivity. Break up long periods of sitting by standing or taking short walks.



Eat Healthy: Opt for whole fruits, non-starchy vegetables, and whole grains instead of sugary foods and refined carbs to avoid blood sugar spikes. Try to limit processed foods.



Drink Water: Swap out sugary drinks for water. It helps manage blood sugar and insulin levels, reducing your diabetes risk.



Quit Smoking: Giving up smoking can significantly reduce your risk of diabetes over time.



Boost Fiber Intake: High fiber foods, especially soluble fiber, help manage blood sugar. Include vegetables, legumes, and whole grains in your diet.



Get Enough Vitamin D: Adequate vitamin D is crucial for blood sugar management. Ensure you're getting enough of it through foods, supplements, or safe sun exposure.



Lose Excess Weight: Shedding just 5-7% of your body weight can lower your diabetes risk by nearly 60%. Eating smaller portions can also help manage blood sugar and support weight loss. Always talk to your doctor if you're considering losing weight.

In addition to making lifestyle changes, getting regular check-ups is crucial for early diagnosis and management. Ask your care provider about a screening if you are over 45 years old or have risk factors like obesity or a family history of diabetes.

By making these changes, you can take charge of your health and reduce your risk of Type 2 diabetes. It's never too late to start!



Spaghetti Squash Alfredo

Enjoy this classic fall vegetable with a creative twist. This recipe swaps out pasta with spaghetti squash for the delicious flavor of alfredo without the extra carbs! **Serves: 4**

INGREDIENTS

- 4 lb. spaghetti squash
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 1 cup half and half
- 3 tbsp. butter
- 1 cup Parmesan cheese
- 4 tbsp. shredded Mozzarella cheese

PREPARATION

1. Scoop out and discard seeds from spaghetti squash halves. Prick outsides all over with sharp knife; season insides with 1/4 teaspoon each of salt and pepper. Microwave, cut sides down, on large microwave-safe plate on high 10 minutes or until tender.
2. Meanwhile, in a small saucepan, heat half-and-half and butter to simmering on medium-low; simmer 5 minutes, or until reduced slightly, then whisk in finely grated Parmesan cheese.
3. Using a fork, scrape flesh of each squash half to separate into strands, leaving 1/2-inch border on sides; divide sauce among halves and top each with 2 tablespoons shredded mozzarella cheese. Broil 1 to 2 minutes or until bubbly and browned in spots. Optional: Serve with green salad.

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

Serving size: 1/4 of the spaghetti squash alfredo

241 calories

3.3g fiber

17.7g fat

5.7g protein

17.9g carbs

Source: modified from Good Housekeeping at goodhousekeeping.com



Behind the Scenes with Guardian Nurses

A program for PPO participants and their eligible dependents

Navigating healthcare can be daunting, especially with serious health issues like surgeries or new diagnoses. That's where Guardian Nurses' Mobile Care Coordinators (MCCs) step in. We talked with two of these dedicated RNs, Tonya Niverson and Samuel Hirst, who explained how they help PPO participants understand their options and get the support they need.

What Do MCCs Do?

MCCs guide patients through the healthcare maze. "We help them find the care they need and make sense of their health insurance benefits," says Tonya. This often includes three-way calls with customer service and suggesting second opinions to ensure patients make well-informed decisions.

MCCs meet people where they're at — from hospitals to provider offices and home visits. They don't provide direct medical care or transportation but do help patients find transportation if needed.

Personalized Support

Tonya and Sam both stress the importance of personalized care. MCCs always start with a comprehensive intake assessment to identify their patients' strengths and needs. Building relationships allows them to provide tailored support, from reminding patients about screenings to offering emotional support.

"Every patient interaction is unique, and we adapt our communication methods to fit their preferences," says Sam, mentioning calls, texts, emails, and in-person meetings.

Helping with Healthcare Decisions

Facing a new diagnosis or considering treatments can be overwhelming. Tonya emphasizes the role of MCCs in educating patients about their options. "We do extensive research and guide them to trusted resources," she explains. Sam adds the importance of offering additional options while respecting the patient's trust in their initial diagnosis.

Focus on Mental Health

Supporting patients with mental health issues like depression, anxiety, or addiction is a significant part of Sam's role. The first step? Listening. "It's about creating a non-judgmental space and congratulating patients on taking the first step towards recovery," he says.

Sam also highlights the importance of trial and error in finding the right support, from helping patients pick a therapist to connecting them with cognitive therapy or support groups.

The Mobile Care Coordinator (MCC) Program is available to all eligible PPO plan participants, including spouses and dependent children.

To request help from an MCC Nurse if you are going to be hospitalized, or for a serious health condition, call **(877) 362-9969** and select **option 2**.

Why They Love Their Job

Tonya loves the hands-on MCC model.



“ Being able to change peoples' lives and help them change their own lives to be the best they can be keeps me passionate every day. ”

Sam enjoys the autonomy and creativity in care coordination.



“ Every day is different, every intake is new, and meeting in person with patients, providers, and family members helps build trust. ”

Tonya and Sam Want You to Know:

- ★ We'll never say, "that's not our problem." There aren't any stupid questions, and you're not wasting anyone's time. This is what we're here to do!
- ★ The program is completely confidential — we don't share your information with the union, Trust, doctors, or anyone else.
- ★ There's no cost! MCC services are fully paid for by the Trust.

Invest in Your Future with Preventive Care

When life gets busy, it can be easy to forget to prioritize your health and well-being. However, prioritizing preventive care — the steps you take to avoid illness — can help you stay healthier longer and lower your healthcare costs in the future.

The Key Components of Preventive Care:



Regular Check-ups and Screenings:

Routine check-ups and screenings are essential for early detection of conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes, and cancer. The types of screenings you need depend on your age, sex, and family history.



Vaccinations and Immunizations:

Staying current with vaccines, such as flu shots and COVID-19 vaccines, helps protect you from infectious diseases and reduces the risk of spreading illness.



Lifestyle Modifications:

Adopting a healthy lifestyle can help you avoid many health issues down the line. This includes focusing on balanced nutrition, regular exercise, stress management, avoiding smoking, and ensuring adequate sleep.



Health Education and Awareness:

Understanding your family history and health risks is key to effective prevention. Use available resources, including mental health support, to stay informed and proactive.

Recognizing Changes in Your Body

Part of preventive health is recognizing changes in your body that may not be normal. Detecting symptoms like lumps, unexplained weight loss, persistent fevers, chronic coughs, changes in bowel movements, and skin changes can lead to timely medical intervention.



Earn HRA Funding with Prevention @ 100%

To keep you and your loved ones healthy, your covered eligible in-network preventive care is paid in full by the Trust—with no deductibles or co-insurance. Plus, you may earn Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) funding, if eligible, through preventive care:

Earn \$200 – \$500 for getting the following covered vaccines:

- Get a Covered Flu Shot
- Get both doses (if applicable) of FDA approved COVID-19 Vaccine
- Get an FDA approved COVID-19 Vaccine Booster

Earn \$100 for getting **one** of the following covered services:

- Well-adult annual physical
- Preventive mammogram, Pap smear, or prostate exam
- Certain adult immunizations
- Biometric screening
- Preventive colon cancer screening

By embracing preventive care, you can take proactive steps towards a healthier, more balanced life. Remember, it's never too late to start prioritizing your health and well-being!

Sources: medlineplus.gov

Important Numbers to Know

PPO PLAN PARTICIPANTS

Trust Office—Benefits, Eligibility, HRA	(206) 282-4500 or (800) 225-7620
Delta Dental PPO & Schedule Plan	(800) 554-1907
DeltaCare	(800) 650-1583
VSP (Vision Service Plan)	(800) 877-7195
WellDyneRx—for Prescription Coverage	(888) 479-2000
MCC Nurses—for Hospitalization/Health Conditions	(877) 362-9969 Option 2
MCC Nurses—for Behavioral Health	(206) 308-5632
Nurse Line	(877) 362-9969 Option 1
Health Coaching	(877) 362-9969 Option 3
Quit Tobacco Coaching	(877) 362-9969 Option 4
LiveWell Fit	(800) 225-7620 Option 2, then 5

Privacy Policy

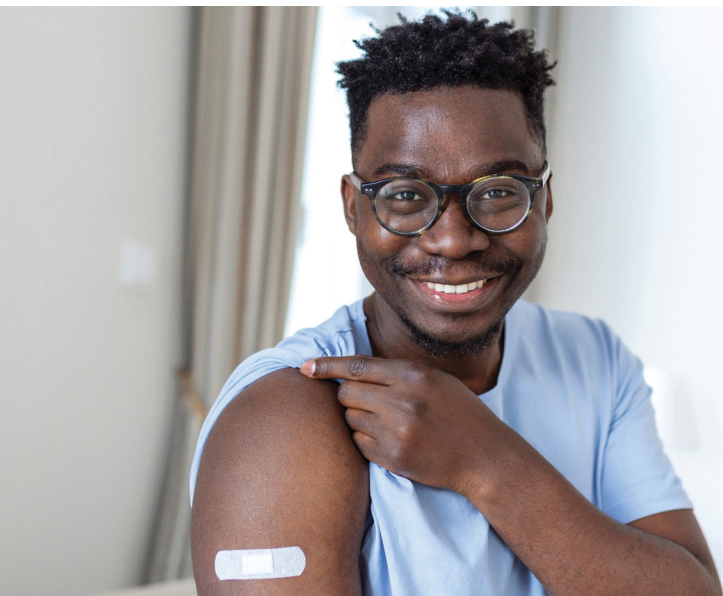
Your health information is completely confidential, protected by federal law, and cannot be shared with your union or your employer without your permission.

All Trust programs are provided and managed by independent service providers contracted by the Trust. The information on your health status and conditions, your medical and prescription drug claims, and the information you may provide when participating is only used to offer you programs that could help you meet your health and wellness goals.

By law, your health information cannot be used to deny healthcare coverage.

KAISER PLAN PARTICIPANTS

Trust Office—Eligibility, HRA	(206) 282-4500 or (800) 225-7620
Kaiser Permanente—Benefits, Claims Status	(888) 901-4636
Delta Dental PPO & Schedule Plan	(800) 554-1907
DeltaCare	(800) 650-1583
WellDyneRx—for Prescription Coverage	(800) 373-1568
Consulting Nurse Helpline	(800) 297-6877
Quit for Life® Tobacco Cessation	(800) 462-5327
LiveWell Fit	(800) 225-7620 Option 2, then 5
Chronic Conditions Workshops	(800) 992-2279



Fall is Flu Shot Season!

You don't have to wait until the weather turns cold to prepare for flu season. According to the CDC, 2024 flu shots will arrive beginning in late summer—so be sure to add annual flu shots to your Fall and back-to-school to-do lists! The best part—flu shots are paid in full by the Trust and you can earn up to \$200 in HRA funding.





SOUND HEALTH
& WELLNESS TRUST

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**GET
INVOLVED**

This newsletter provides a general overview of plan benefits. Please refer to your Plan Booklet for specifics about covered expenses as well as exclusions and limitations. The information in this publication is meant to complement the advice of your healthcare providers, not to replace it. Before making any major changes in your medications, diet, or exercise, talk to your doctor.

Trick or Treat Yourself With LiveWell Fit

Embrace the crisp fall air and invigorate your fitness routine with LiveWell Fit!

Earn HRA funding when you challenge yourself in exciting new ways – from spooky trail runs to bike rides, obstacle courses and stair climbs. You’re sure to get wickedly fit with the Trust reimbursing up to four approved event registration fees per year. Plus, when you bring along an eligible Trust participant to their first event, you’ll both be in the running for a \$300 VISA gift card!



Earn funds for your HRA with LiveWell Fit. See the full list for details.

DATE	EVENT NAME & DESCRIPTION
SEPTEMBER	
14	Spokane March for The Fallen – 9.3, 6.2 or 3.1 mile run/walk
14	Vashon Island Passport 2 Pain – 80, 58, 33 or 12 mile bike ride
14-15	Seattle Orca Half Marathon & 8-Miler – 13 or 7.9 mile run
14-15	Snohomish Spartan Race Beast, Super or Sprint – 13, 6.2 or 3.1 mile obstacle course and kids race
15	Spokane BRRC Sundae Sunday 10-Miler – 10 mile run
15	Quilcene Quilcene Oyster Races – 13.1, 6.2 or 3.1 mile run/walk and kids run
21	Black Diamond Mud Mountain Dam Half Marathon & 5k – 13.1 or 3.1 mile run/walk
21	Maple Valley Be the Hope XOXO Walk – 1.8 mile walk
21	Anacortes Anacortes Half Marathon & 5k – 13.1 or 3.1 mile run/walk
21	Grand Coulee Run the Dam – 13.1, 6.2 or 3.1 mile run/walk
21	Redmond Get Your Rear In Gear – 3.1 mile run/walk
22	Richland Ironman 70.3 Washington – 13.1 mile run, 56 mile bike, 1.2 mile swim
22	Redmond The Retro Run – 4.97, 3.1 or 2 mile run/walk and kids dash
22	Bellingham Bellingham Bay Marathon – 26.2, 13.1, 6.2 or 3.1 mile run/walk
28	Mount Vernon Skagit Bigfoot Fest – 3.1 mile run/walk
28	Woodinville 3.1 mile run/walk – 13.1, 6.2 or 3.1 mile run/walk
28	Seattle Walk to End Alzheimer’s – 1.7 mile walk