

Medications



Quick Reference Guide

Does all medicine require a prescription?

What is over-the-counter medicine for?

Can I take prescription medicine with OTCs?

How do I read a drug label?

Can the same medicine have different names?

How can I get more medicine?

 [Medical Services](#)

 [Health Promotion Appointment](#)

Does all medicine require a prescription?

Prescription medicine is ordered for you by a healthcare provider after a clinical visit. You can buy **Over-the-counter medicine** (OTCs) without a prescription. Behind-the-counter medicine (BTCs) doesn't require a prescription, but they do require the assistance of a pharmacist or pharmacy tech to buy.

OTCs can also be bought in grocery stores, airports, or gas stations, among other places. Prescription medicine must be picked up at a pharmacy.

What is over-the-counter medicine used for?

OTCs treat minor symptoms of a health issue like aches, pain, itching, or congestion. You don't need to consult a healthcare provider before you start using an OTC. If your symptoms continue for more than a few days or get worse, schedule an appointment with a healthcare provider.

Can I take prescription medicine with OTCs?

This depends on the medicine you're taking. Ask your healthcare provider about drug interactions. Or, read the drug label to see side effects.

Your healthcare provider may tell you to use OTCs to help manage symptoms in addition to your prescription medicine. For example, if you have an ear infection, you may be given a prescription for antibiotics and told to use an OTC to reduce the fever or manage pain caused by the infection.



What is included on a drug label?

All medicine will have a label on the bottle or package. While labels may look different, they contain the same type of general information.

The label will have:

- > The instructions for how to take the medicine
- > What the medicine does
- > The ingredients
- > Known side effects and interaction with other medicine or health conditions
- > How to store the medicine

Type 1:

1 R PHARMACY
123 Main Street, #0000
City, USA 00000
TEL 555-555-5555

2 RX 105004

3 QTY: 60
REFILLS: 2 by MM/DD/YYYY

4 PRSCBR: J. Smith
DATE FILLED: MM/DD/YYYY
RPH: S. Williams
MFR: ABC Manufacturer

5 This is a WHITE, OVAL-SHAPED tablet imprinted with 93 on the front and 48 on the back.

6 METFORMIN HCL 500MG
MORNING 1 TABLET
MIDDAY
EVENING 1 TABLET
BEDTIME

7 Patient Name
123 West Street, City, USA 00000

8 METFORMIN HCL 500 MG TABLET
Generic equivalent of: Glucophage

9 Take 1 tablet orally 2 times a day

10 Important Information
- Talk to your Dr. about the safe use of alcohol while taking this drug.
- Severe vomiting or diarrhea may cause dehydration if these occur call MD.
- Drug may cause lactic acidosis. If symptoms develop, seek medical help.

11 CAUTION Federal law prohibits the transfer of this drug to any person other than the patient for whom it was prescribed.

12

- 1 Pharmacy contact information
- 2 Prescription identification
- 3 Total number of tablets dispensed/refills remaining
- 4 **PRSCBR:** Doctor who prescribed the medication
Date filled: When the pharmacy filled the prescription
RPH: A registered pharmacist who filled the medication
MFR: Pharmaceutical manufacturer of the medication
- 5 Physical description of the medication
- 6 Dosing schedule as prescribed
- 7 Patient name and address
- 8 Medication name and strength
- 9 Dosage of medication
- 10 Auxiliary warning labels
- 11 Required federal caution statement
- 12 Barcode used by pharmacists to look up medication

Type 2:

1 **Drug Facts**

Active ingredient (in each tablet) Purpose
Chlorpheniramine maleate 2 mg Antihistamine

2 Uses temporarily relieves these symptoms due to hay fever or other upper respiratory allergies:
■ sneezing ■ runny nose ■ itchy, watery eyes
■ itchy throat

3 Warnings
Ask a doctor before use if you have
■ glaucoma
■ a breathing problem such as emphysema or chronic bronchitis
■ trouble urinating due to an enlarged prostate gland

Ask a doctor or pharmacist before use if you are taking tranquilizers or sedatives

When using this product
■ You may get drowsy ■ Avoid alcoholic drinks
■ Alcohol, sedatives, and tranquilizers may increase drowsiness
■ Be careful when driving a motor vehicle or operating machinery
■ Excitability may occur, especially in children

If pregnant or breastfeeding, ask a health professional before use.

Keep out of reach of children. In case of overdose, get medical help or contact a Poison Control Center right away.

4 Directions

Adults and children 12 years and over	Take 2 tablets every 4 to 6 hours; not more than 12 tablets in 24 hours
Children 6 years to under 12 years	Take 1 tablet every 4 to 6 hours; not more than 6 tablets in 24 hours
Children under 6 years	Ask a doctor

5 Other information Store at 20-25° C (68-77° F)
■ Protect from excessive moisture

6 Inactive ingredients D&C yellow no. 10, lactose, magnesium stearate, microcrystalline cellulose, pregelatinized starch

1 Active Ingredient and Purpose

2 Uses: This section tells you what symptoms and conditions the drug can treat.

3 Warnings: This section tells you about any severe side effects or drug interactions that can occur and describes who should not use the drug. It tells you when to stop using the drug and when to consult your doctor and/or pharmacist.

4 Directions: This section of the label tells you when, how and how often to take the drug. Keep in mind that children may have different instructions from adults.

5 Other Information: This section tells you how to store the drug. Some drugs may be sensitive to heat or moisture.

6 Inactive Ingredients: In addition to the active ingredient that makes the drug work, medications also have ingredients such as dyes, preservatives and flavoring agents.



**If you have questions about any medicine,
talk with a healthcare provider.**

Can the same medicine have different names?

Yes. Medicine can have different names depending on who creates that specific drug. These are called the **brand name** and the **generic name**. You'll see brand and generic forms of both OTC and prescription medicine.

- › Note that some medicine may only exist in the brand name forms. You won't have the option to take a generic.

Even with these different names, the medicine will have the same **active ingredients**, or the part(s) of the medicine that helps to manage your condition or symptoms. Both have met the rigorous standards for approval with the US Food & Drug Administration and have been proven to be effective treatments for specific conditions.

Often, the generic brands cost less as they did not have to repeat many of the background research studies as the name brand. These medicines have *already demonstrated they are safe and effective* through the brand name.

- › With OTCs, make sure you read the drug label to see the active ingredients to find the one that works best for you at the best price.
- › With prescription medicine, talk to your healthcare provider about the costs and the options available.

If you have questions, talk to a healthcare provider, or ask a pharmacist.

How can I get more medicine?

If it's an over-the-counter medicine, you can buy more in a store.

With prescriptions, you will need to have a **refill** in order to get more. Refills are the number of times you can get another round of medicine before you need to go back to see your healthcare provider again.

When the healthcare provider writes you the prescription, they will give you a set number of refills based on the condition they're treating. The number of refills will depend on the health condition and the type of medicine ordered.

- › With some medicine, you may not need any refills. You take the medicine until it's out, and the problem should be resolved. If symptoms continue, contact your healthcare provider.
- › Other times, you may have a set number of refills. If you need more medicine (and have refills remaining), you'll contact the pharmacy to request a refill. When you don't have any more refills, you'll need to contact your healthcare provider.
- › For some medications, you may need to go back and see a provider every time you need a refill.

Your prescription bottle will often say the number of refills that you have available, and you can always check with your healthcare provider or your pharmacy to get more information.

See our guide on refills for information on requesting a refill.

[Back to Top](#)

