

From the Parish Nurse

Medicine Safety

One of the most important things people can do to keep themselves and their family safe is to learn how to properly take, monitor, and store their medicines.

All Patients:

- Know your medicines. Keep a list of the names of your (and each of your children's) medicines, how much you take, and when you take them. Include over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and supplements and herbs. Take this list to all your doctor visits.
- Follow the directions. Take your medicines exactly as prescribed. ***Don't take medications prescribed for someone else.***
- Ask questions. If you don't know the answers to these questions, ask your doctor or pharmacist.
 - Why am I taking this medicine?
 - What are the common problems to watch out for?
 - What should I do if they occur?
 - When should I stop this medicine?
 - Can I take this medicine with the other medicines on my list?

Parents of young children

- Store medicines safety. Keep all medicines stored securely, out of the reach of children.
- Leave medicines in their original packaging and make sure the caps are always secured. ***Never tell children that medication is candy.***
- Avoid unnecessary medicines. Antibiotics and cough and cold medications will not cure most colds, coughs, flu, sore throats, or runny noses. These medicines can sometimes cause more harm than good.

Adults and older adults

- Take pain relievers only as directed. If you are taking opioid pain relievers, be sure to tell your doctor about all other medicines you are taking because some medicines, when taken with pain relievers, can be harmful, such as causing an overdose.
- Ask if you need blood testing. If you take any medicines that require special testing, pay particular attention to taking these properly and get regular blood testing. Common medicines that can require blood testing are blood thinners (e.g., Coumadin/warfarin), diabetes medications (e.g., insulin), seizure medications (e.g., Dilantin/phenytoin), and the heart medicine Lanoxin/digoxin..

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