



Medication Side Effects

Experiencing unwanted side effects? Use this handout to help identify them so that you can talk to your doctor or pharmacist about finding relief.

Common Side Effects:

- Low blood sugar
- Upset stomach
- Rash or itching
- Weight gain
- Gas, bloating or diarrhea
- Swelling of legs or ankles

More Likely to Experience Side Effects When:

- You start taking a new drug, dietary supplement or vitamin/mineral
- You stop taking a drug that you've been on for a while
- You increase or decrease the amount of a drug that you take
- You lose weight, eat better, and move more (the healthier you are, the better your body does with **less** medication)

Avoiding Side Effects:

There are several ways to learn about potential side effects for your drugs and reduce your risk of experiencing a side effect.

- Ask your pharmacist for the patient prescribing information when you receive your prescription. This document will include possible common and serious side effects.
- Ask your health care professional about any possible side effects and what (if any) steps you can take to reduce your risk when you are prescribed a drug. For example, your doctor may recommend taking the drug with food to lower the chance of getting nausea.
- Read the pharmacy label and any stickers that may be attached to the prescription bottle. The label and stickers have information on how to take the drug and possible side effects.

Monitoring Side Effects:

- Keep a pen and paper handy, and take note of changes in your body or mind.
- Ask your Support Squad to keep an eye on you when you change medication or start taking a new one, and tell them to alert you if your behavior or speech changes.