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Advice for the Patient

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Advice for the Patient

By authority of the United States Pharmacopeial Convention, Inc.

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To The Reader

When purchasing a medicine, whether over-the-counter (nonprescription) or with a doctor's prescription, you may have questions about its usefulness to you, the best way to take it, possible side effects, and advisable precautions. For instance, some medicines should be taken with meals, others between meals. Some may make you drowsy while others may tend to keep you awake. Alcoholic or other beverages, other medicines, certain foods, or smoking may affect the way your medicine works. As for side effects, some are merely bothersome and may go away while others may require medical attention.

Advice for the Patient contains information which may provide general answers to some of your questions as well as suggestions for the correct use of your medicine. *It is important to remember, however, that the human body is very complex and medicines may act differently on different people—and even in the same person at different times. If you feel that you need additional information about your medicine or its possible side effects, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist. They are there to help you.*

Organization of Information:

Advice for the Patient contains a section of general information about the correct use of any medicine, as well as individual discussions of a wide variety of commonly and not so commonly used medicines. *You should read both the general information and the information specific to the medicine you are taking.* See page vi for this general information.

Each medicine appears under its generic rather than brand name. If you already know the generic name of your medicine, you can find it listed in alphabetic order beginning on page 1. If not, look in the index starting on page 765. Common brand names are given in the index also. It is a good idea for you to learn both the generic and brand names of your medicine and even to write them down and keep them for future use.

Information for each medicine is divided according to the area of the body which is affected. The common divisions used are:

- **SYSTEMIC**—For general effects throughout the body; applies to most medicines when taken by mouth or given by injection.
- **TOPICAL**—For local effects when applied directly to the skin.
- **NASAL**—For local effects when used in the nose.
- **OPHTHALMIC**—For local effects when applied directly to the eyes.
- **OTIC**—For local effects when used in the ear.
- **RECTAL**—For local effects when used in the rectum.
- **VAGINAL**—For local effects when used in the vagina.

As a general rule, information for one type of use will not be the same as for other types of use. Thus, if you take tetracycline capsules by mouth for their systemic effect in treating an infection, the information will not be the same as for tetracycline ointment which is applied directly to the skin for its topical effects.

Notice:

The information about the drugs contained herein is general in nature and is not intended to replace specific instructions or directions or warnings given to you by your physician or other prescriber or accompanying a particular product. The information is selective and it is not claimed that it includes all known precautions, contraindications, effects, or interactions possibly related to the use of a drug. The information may differ from that contained in official product labeling required by law. The information is not sufficient to make an evaluation as to the risks and benefits of taking a particular drug in a particular case or to provide medical advice for individual problems and should not alone be relied upon for these purposes. Since the inclusion or exclusion of particular information about a drug is judgmental in nature and since opinion as to drug usage may differ, you may wish to consult additional sources. Should you desire additional information or if you have any questions as to how this information may relate to you in particular, ask your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.

Since previously unreported side effects, newly recognized precautions, or other new information for any given drug may come to light at any time, continuously updated drug information sources should be consulted as necessary. Please be advised that USPC makes available on subscription a newsletter providing substantive corrections and selected updates on the information contained in this volume (see inside back cover for ordering information).

There are many brands of drugs on the market. The listing of selected brand names is intended only for ease of reference. The inclusion of a brand name does not mean the USPC has any particular knowledge that the brand listed has properties different from other brands of the same drug, nor should it be interpreted as an endorsement by the USPC. Similarly, the fact that a particular brand has not been included does not indicate that the product has been judged to be unsatisfactory or unacceptable.

If any of the information in this book causes you special concern, do not decide against taking any medicine prescribed for you without first checking with your doctor.

About USP:

The information in this volume is prepared by the United States Pharmacopeial Convention, Inc. (USPC), the organization which sets the official standards of strength, quality, purity, packaging, and labeling for medical products used in the United States.

The United States Pharmacopeial Convention is an independent, non-profit corporation composed of representatives from accredited colleges of medicine and pharmacy in the U.S.; state medical and pharmaceutical associations; many national associations concerned with medicines, such as the American Medical Association, the American Nurses Association, the American Dental Association, and the American Pharmaceutical Association; and various departments of the federal government, including the Food and Drug Administration. It was established over 160 years ago, and is the only national body that represents the professions of both pharmacy and medicine.

The first convention came into being on January 1, 1820, and within the year published the first national drug formulary of the United States. The U.S. Pharmacopeia of 1820 contained 217 drug names, divided into two groups according to the level of general acceptance and usage.

When Congress passed the first major drug safety law in 1906, the standards recognized by that statute were those set forth in the United States Pharmacopeia and in the National Formulary. Today, the USP and NF continue to be the official U.S. compendia for standards for drugs and for the inactive ingredients in drug dosage forms. The United States Pharmacopeia is now the world's oldest regularly revised pharmacopeia and is generally accepted as being the best.

The work of the USPC is carried out by the Committee of Revision. This committee of experts is elected by the Convention and currently consists of 85 outstanding physicians, pharmacists, dentists, nurses, chemists, and other individuals particularly qualified to judge the merits of drugs and the standards and information that should apply to them. Committee members serve without pay and are assisted by numerous advisory panels, other outside reviewers, and USPC staff.

About USP DI:

Advice for the Patient is Volume II of *USP DI*. Volume I contains drug use information in technical language for the doctor, pharmacist, nurse or other health care provider, and Volume II is its lay language counterpart for use by consumers. Together, they form the foundation of a coordinated approach to drug-use education.

Three years in the making, *USP DI* was first published in 1980. It is a continuously reviewed and revised base of drug information intended for use by prescribers, dispensers, and consumers of medications. The information is developed by the consensus of the USP Committee of Revision and its Advisory Panels and anyone, including users of medicines, may contribute through review and comment on drafts of the monographs published in *USP DI Review*.

For further information about *USP DI* or to comment as to how the information published in this volume might better meet your information needs, please contact:

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General Information About Use of Medicines

For your own safety, health, and well-being, it is important that you learn about the proper use of your specific medicine. The information that follows is general in nature and applies to the use of any medicine. It must be supplemented with the drug-specific information found in the individual listings of this book.

• Tell your doctor and pharmacist about any medical problems you may have and all medicines you are now taking or have taken in the past few weeks. Don't forget over-the-counter (nonprescription) medicines such as aspirin, laxatives, and antacids.

• Before having any kind of surgery (including dental surgery) or emergency treatment, tell the doctor or dentist in charge about any medicine you are taking.

• Tell your doctor and pharmacist if you have ever had an allergic or unusual reaction to any medicine.

• Most medicines contain more than their active ingredient. If you are on a low-salt, low-sugar, or any other special diet, or if you are allergic to any substance, such as yellow dye, before taking any medicine check with your doctor or pharmacist about what is contained in it.

• If you are pregnant or if you plan to become pregnant, check with your doctor before taking any medicine. Certain medicines may cause birth defects or other problems in the unborn child. For other medicines, safe use during pregnancy has not been established. **The use of any medicine during pregnancy must be carefully considered.**

• If you are breast-feeding a baby, check with your doctor before taking any medicine. Some medicines may pass into the breast milk and cause unwanted effects in the infant.

• Take medicine exactly as directed, at the right time, and for the full length of time prescribed by your doctor. If you are using an over-the-counter (nonprescription) medicine, follow the directions on the label, unless otherwise directed by your doctor. If you feel that your medicine is not working for you, check with your doctor.

• Keep all medicines out of the reach of children.

• Child-proof caps on most prescription medicines for oral use are required by law. However, if there are no children in your home, and you find it hard to open such caps, you may ask your pharmacist for a regular, easier-to-open cap. He or she is authorized by law to furnish you with a regular cap if you request it.

• How to store your medicine: Store medicine away from bright light in a cool, dry place such as a kitchen cabinet or

the bedroom, out of the reach of children. Do not store medicine in the bathroom, where it is too warm and humid, or in the refrigerator unless you are told to do so.

• Different medicines should never be mixed in one container. Always store your medicine in its original container, kept tightly capped when not in use. Do not remove the label since directions for use and other special information appear there.

• To avoid mistakes, do not take medicine in the dark. Always read the label before taking, noting especially the expiration date, if any, of the contents.

• If you think you have taken an overdose of any medicine or if a child has taken a medicine by accident: Call your poison control center or your doctor or pharmacist, at once. Keep those telephone numbers handy. Also, keep a bottle of Ipecac Syrup safely stored in your home in case you are told to cause vomiting. Read the directions on the label of Ipecac Syrup before using.

• If you notice unusual reactions or side effects while taking any medicine, check with your doctor or pharmacist.

• After your doctor has told you to stop taking a medicine, ask if you should save it for future use. If not, discard by flushing it down the toilet. Never give your medicine to anyone else. It has been prescribed for your personal medical problem and may not be the correct treatment for another person.

• It is a good idea for you to learn both the generic and brand names of your medicine and even to write them down and keep them for future use.

• Do not be embarrassed to ask questions about any medicine you are taking. To help you remember, it may be helpful to write down any questions you have and bring these questions with you on your next visit to your doctor or pharmacist. Also, if you want more information about your medicines, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

• Many prescriptions may not be refilled unless your pharmacist has first checked with your doctor. To save time, do not wait until you have run out of medicine before requesting a refill. This is especially important if you must take your medicine every day.

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