



How Well Do You Know Your Meds?



National Check Your Meds Day is October 21. It's a great opportunity for you to get to know your pharmacist and ensure proper use of your medicines.

Request a consultation with your regular pharmacist, who should:

- » Review your prescribed medicines and answer questions about them.
- » Advise you to remove any medicines that have expired or are no longer needed.
- » Give you an updated medication list for health care visits.

Prior to meeting with your pharmacist:

- » Collect all your prescription meds, over-the-counter meds, vitamin and mineral supplements and herbal products.
- » List how and when you take each medicine and supplement; bring the list and your medications to review with the pharmacist.

Best ways to avoid medication errors and misuse:

- » Take part in your health care decisions.
- » Learn why you need your medicines.
- » Follow instructions for use carefully.
- » Learn about and report possible adverse reactions.

Also, don't take meds that are not prescribed for you. And make sure all your health care providers know all the meds you are taking.

Try to have all prescriptions filled at the same pharmacy. Your pharmacist should be a vital member of your health care team, ready to assist and answer your questions.

Celebrate Squash Season

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD



Looking for a delicious and nutritious side dish? Try squash: butternut, pumpkin, spaghetti, acorn or Hubbard, for starters.

Squash provides a variety of vitamins and minerals, including iron, folate, potassium and vitamin C. Plus, the bright orange or yellow color means that squash is filled with the antioxidant beta-carotene, a form of vitamin A that is helpful for protecting vision.

Here's your cheat sheet for preparing squash:

Peeled and cubed **butternut** or **Hubbard squash** can be drizzled with olive oil and roasted in the oven at 400°F for about 30 to 40 minutes. Use the cubes as a side dish, atop salad, or as the start of a delicious squash soup.

When cooking **pumpkin**, use the smaller varieties, which taste sweeter than the large carving Halloween pumpkins. Boil the flesh for a delicious pumpkin mash. Sprinkle with cinnamon.

Spaghetti squash looks just like its name.

After roasting it for about 40 minutes, use a fork to tease out the spaghetti-like strands, and serve like pasta, topped with marinara, pesto, or olive oil and garlic. **Bonus:** It's just 40 calories per cup versus 235 calories for a cup of pasta.

Try roasted **acorn squash** with the finest drizzle of pure maple syrup, paired with pecans or walnuts.

Learn more at the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: Search for squash at www.eatright.org.



“Do the one thing you think you cannot do. Fail at it. Try again. Do better the second time. The only people who never tumble are those who never mount the high wire. This is your moment.” — Oprah Winfrey

Q: OTC meds for colds and flu?

A: Medications available over the counter do not cure the common cold or influenza (flu). But they may alleviate symptoms and temporarily help you feel better:

» **Decongestants:** They decrease nasal or sinus congestion. Side effects include anxiety, insomnia or increased heart rate and blood pressure. Use of decongestant nose sprays should not exceed 3 days to avoid rebound congestion. **Tip:** Consider using a saline nasal spray instead.

» **Antihistamines:** Excess drainage? Antihistamines can help dry up a runny nose or watery eyes. But they may make you drowsy and thicken the mucous, allowing secretions to build up.

» **Cough suppressants:** They're useful for frequent coughing, especially if it's painful or keeps you awake.

» **Drugs for fever and aches:** Acetaminophen and ibuprofen can provide relief. Check labels to ensure you're not getting the same ingredient from multiple products. **Note:** People younger than 19 should avoid aspirin, which is a cause of Reye's syndrome.

— Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month.



Breast Cancer:

What You Need to Know

More women are surviving breast cancer today, largely due to improvements in early detection. Some good news: American Cancer Society (ACS) statistics show the breast cancer death rate dropped 40% between 1989 and 2016 — saving 322,000 lives. And fewer than 1 in 6 women diagnosed will die of the disease.

However, breast cancer remains the No. 1 cause of cancer in U.S. women.

And it is a major, potentially long-term health problem with more than 268,000 new cases expected this year. Most deaths and diagnoses from breast cancer occur in women after age 50.

The American Cancer Society recommends the following guidelines for women at average risk:

Age 40 to 44: Discuss screening with your provider by age 40.

Age 45 to 54: Get annual mammograms.

Age 55-plus: Get mammograms every 1 to 2 years, depending on personal risk.

Important: Ask your health care provider about the best screening approach based on your health history. If possible, choose a testing facility that uses digital mammography with potentially better detection.

Learn more at www.cancer.org.



October is Liver Cancer Awareness Month.



The American Liver Foundation is raising awareness about increasing liver cancer rates in the U.S. Although not the only risk factors for liver cancer, hepatitis C and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease are strongly linked to liver cancer. Talk to your health care provider to learn about liver cancer risk factors and screenings.

Learn more at www.liverfoundation.org/for-patients/resources.



National Mental Illness Awareness Week is October 6 to 12.



This is an opportunity to learn more about a very common health problem: mental illness. One in 5 American adults has a mental illness, ranging from mild to severe, according to the National Institute of Mental Health. Disorders include ongoing depression, anxiety, eating disorders and addictive behavior. Fortunately, effective help is available. Learn more at www.nami.org/Find-Support.



The **Smart Moves Toolkit**, including this issue's printable download, **Handwashing: A Refresher Course**, is at www.personalbest.com/extras/19V10tools.

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