



Managing Your Medications



CMHA Ottawa believes that recovery from mental illness is possible.

There are many factors that can contribute to recovery, including the proper use of medications.

Managing your medications

You play a vital role in your health and wellness, so it is important for you to understand the different parts of your treatment plan.

Medications can be an effective tool in your recovery from mental health challenges, so here is some helpful information about them.

Medications work best when they are taken properly. This applies to medications that are prescribed by your doctor, as well as over-the-counter medications such as cough syrup, vitamins and herbal remedies.

Some basic things you should know about your medications include:

- The names of your medications and what they do
- When and how to take your medications
- What to do if you miss a dose
- What side effects to expect
- How to properly store your medications

It is important to know these facts about your medications, and it is a good idea to keep a list of all the medications you are taking, and when and how to take them. And if at any time you have questions about your medications, you can contact your doctor or your pharmacist.

Taking your medications

- Take your medications exactly as prescribed.
- Check the expiry date on all medications, vitamins and herbal remedies, and don't take expired medications.
- Know how to store your medications properly – some medications cannot be exposed to light, some medications must be refrigerated, etc.
- Know whether you should take your medications with food or on an empty stomach, and whether or not there are certain foods you should avoid.
- Never take anybody else's medications, and don't share your medications with anybody else.
- Don't skip doses or cut back on your medications to save money – if you can't afford your medications, talk to your doctor, your pharmacist, or your case manager, because there may be financial support programs to help with the cost.



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Organizing your medications

To ensure that you are taking your medications at the right time, develop a system that helps you remember when to take them, such as:

- Dosettes or pill organizers
- Blister packs from the pharmacist
- A calendar
- Reminders from a friend, family or your pharmacy
- Wrist watch or clock alarm

Speaking up

When you are prescribed medication, it's important for you to provide your doctor or pharmacist with information that will help them know what medications will work best for you.

Here are some things they should know:

- Tell them what other medications you are taking, including over-the-counter medications and herbal remedies, as these can sometimes interact with your prescription
- Tell them about any food or drug allergies you might have
- Tell them about any side effects, unusual sensations or changes you might be experiencing when you take the medications

Questions about your medications

If at any time you have questions about your medications, it's important to ask them. You can talk to your doctor or pharmacist about your questions, and sometimes it's helpful to write them down in advance. When you are given an answer to a question, you may not completely understand it, so be sure to ask your doctor or pharmacist to explain it again. You can also ask where you can go to get more information.

My questions are: _____

Who can I ask?

My health care providers

Doctor(s):

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Pharmacist:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____

CMHA Ottawa Case Manager:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____

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