



Over-the-Counter (OTC) Medications

Over-the-counter (OTC) medications are ones that you can get without a prescription. Often, they are less potent than prescribed ones. When taken in large amounts, though, an OTC medicine might equal or exceed the dose of a prescribed medicine. Read the information on the label. To learn more about OTC medicine labels, access www.fda.gov. Search for “over-the-counter medicine label.” An example is in the next column.



Use OTC medications as directed.

Use OTC Medicines Wisely

- Ask your doctor or health care provider what OTC products are safe for you to use and what you should take for pain and fever.
- To prevent harmful side effects and interactions, review all of the OTC medicines, supplements, and herbal remedies that you take with your doctor.
- Do not take OTC medicines on a regular basis unless your doctor tells you to.
- Read the package labels. Heed the warnings listed. If you are unsure whether or not an OTC medication will help or harm you, check with your doctor or pharmacist.
- Store medicines in a dry place and out of children’s reach. Do not call medicine “candy.”
- Before you take a medicine, check the expiration date. Discard expired medicines. Crush pills. Dissolve them in water. Mix this with used coffee grounds or kitty litter and put it in the garbage in a sealed bag.

- If you have an allergy to a medicine, check the list of ingredients on OTC medicine labels. Find out if what you are allergic to is in them. Some labels will warn persons with certain allergies to avoid taking that medicine.
- Do not take any OTC product if you are pregnant or nursing a baby unless your doctor or health care provider says it is okay.
- Before taking herbal remedies and supplements, check with your doctor.

Drug Facts (Sample OTC label from www.fda.gov)

Active ingredient (in each tablet)	Purpose
Chlorpheniramine maleate 2 mg	Antihistamine

Uses temporarily relieves these symptoms due to hay fever or other upper respiratory allergies:

- sneezing
- runny nose
- itchy, watery eyes
- itchy throat

Warnings

Ask a doctor before use if you have

- glaucoma
- a breathing problem such as emphysema or chronic bronchitis
- trouble urinating due to an enlarged prostate gland

Ask a doctor or pharmacist before use if you are taking tranquilizers or sedatives

When using this product

- You may get drowsy
- avoid alcoholic drinks
- alcohol, sedatives, and tranquilizers may increase drowsiness
- be careful when driving a motor vehicle or operating machinery
- excitability may occur, especially in children

If pregnant or breast-feeding, ask a health professional before use.

Keep out of reach of children. In case of overdose, get medical help or contact a Poison Control Center right away.

Directions

adults and children 12 years and over	take 2 tablets every 4 to 6 hours; not more than 12 tablets in 24 hours
children 6 years to under 12 years	take 1 tablet every 4 to 6 hours; not more than 6 tablets in 24 hours
children under 6 years	ask a doctor

Other information: store at 20-25°C (68-77°F). Protect from excessive moisture.

Inactive ingredients: D&C yellow no. 10, lactose, magnesium stearate, microcrystalline cellulose, pregelatinized starch