

Home Safety for You and Your Family

Fire Safety

■ smoke alarms:

- Install a working smoke alarm on every level of your house.
- Put one in each bedroom and outside each sleeping area.
- Test the alarms at least once a month.
- If the alarms have batteries, change them at least once a year.

■ fire extinguishers:

- Buy multi-purpose extinguishers that can put out different types of small fires.
- Keep one close to each exit.

■ escape plan:

- Have a plan for how to get out of your house and where to meet.
- Make sure everyone in your family practices the escape plan.

Visit the National Fire Protection Association website (nfpa.org) for more information.

Infection Safety

- Wash your hands often with soap and water or with an alcohol-based hand cleanser.
- Wash your hands:
 - before touching your face
 - before and after changing a diaper
 - before and after breastfeeding or bottle feeding.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

- Consider getting the flu (influenza) and pneumonia (pneumococcal) vaccines each year.

- If you are pregnant, do not handle cat litter.

Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website (cdc.gov) for more information.

Fall Safety

- Medicine may make your dizzy or unsteady. Be extra careful.
- If you are feeling unsteady, have help carrying your baby.
- Make sure hallways or walkways in rooms and stairways are free of clutter and are well-lit. Use night lights.
- You may feel unsteady when walking. This is caused by lack of sleep or changes in your body after giving birth.
- Remove throw rugs until you are steady.
- Use non-skid strips or a bath mat in your bathtub.

Visit the Minnesota Department of Health website (health.state.mn.us) for more information.

Medicine Safety

How to track your medicines

- Keeping track of your medicines, and knowing how and when to take them, is important to your health.

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- It can be helpful to list the medicines you need to take and write down when have taken them. This can help you keep track and follow your health care provider’s directions.

How to take medicine: what to do

- Take your medicines as directed.
- Take your medicine with you if you leave home so you don’t miss a dose.
- If you do miss a dose, take it as soon as you can.
 - If you do not remember to take it until it is time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and return to your regular schedule.
 - Never double up on doses.
- If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, talk with your health care provider before taking any medicines.
- If you are seeing more than one health care provider, tell each one which medicines you are taking.
- To help avoid an upset stomach, take your medicines with a small snack, such as soda crackers.
- To help with dizziness, lie down for a short time after you take your medicines.

How to take medicine: what not to do

- Do not stop taking your medicines without talking to your health care provider or pharmacist.
- Do not share your medicines with anyone else.
- Do not take medicines prescribed for anyone else.
- Do not take any more than the prescribed dose of any medicine.

How to store medicine

- Follow any special instructions you receive for where or how to keep your medicines.
- Keep all medicines (including vitamins and herbals) out of reach of children and pets.
- Keep medicines in their original containers.

- Keep all medicines away from heat, light and humidity. Do not keep medicines in the bathroom or near the kitchen sink.

Side effects of medicines

- Ask your health care provider about the potential side effects before you start taking any medicine.

When to call your health care provider or pharmacist

Call right away if you have:

- any severe or unusual reactions
- any unusual feelings after taking a medicine, such as feeling dizzy, itchy or sick to your stomach.

How to get rid of medicines you are no longer taking

Use the following suggestions and toss into your regular garbage:

- **pills or tablets:**
 - Add a small amount of water to dissolve most of the medicine.
- **liquids:**
 - Add charcoal, sawdust, kitty litter, salt or flour to the liquid.

Please call your city or county government’s household trash and recycling service with questions. You can find the phone number by visiting pca.state.mn.us.

- Type “household hazardous waste” in the search box.
- Click on *Find your household hazardous waste collection site - Minnesota Pollution Control Agency* in the search results.
- Select your county from the drop down menu and click *Go!*

If your county isn’t listed, get information about your city or county government’s household trash and recycling service by calling the number listed on your county’s website.