Managing Your Medications

It is VERY important to keep track of your medications so you know when they are running low. Pick one day a week to go through your medications and make sure you have enough for the week. Try to do this on the same day each week so it becomes part of your routine. At the same time, take out any medications you are no longer using and store them somewhere else or take them to the pharmacy for disposal.

When patients leave the hospital, they are sometimes given a short-term amount of a medication. Please see your family doctor as soon as possible for a prescription refill for your medication, if needed.

Your current medications should be refilled by your family doctor. If you can’t go to your doctor’s office, you or a family member can call and ask how to get your prescriptions.

Allow 3-4 days for your doctor to provide a prescription for refills. Some prescriptions can be phoned in to the pharmacy, but some need to be written. You or a family member may need to pick up the written prescription and take it to the pharmacy to be filled. Doctors are not paid to write prescription refills if the patient is not in their office, so there may be a charge for this.

Prescriptions for controlled medications have to be handwritten on a special form and this form needs to be picked up by you or a family member. If the Palliative Care doctor prescribes a new medication for you, your family doctor will be notified and should be able to refill it for you.

Pharmacists can refill some medications on a short-term basis without a prescription. You can call your pharmacist to ask if this is possible. If you are going to run out of a medication that you need, you can call your Palliative Care nurse and they can try to help you get your medication. It is important not to wait until late in the day or late in the week to call, because there may not be a doctor available. Someone may need to come to the hospital to pick up your prescription and take it to the pharmacy.

The best way to make sure you always have enough medication is to regularly check how much you have left.