

Using Medications Safely When You Have Kidney Disease

- Ask your health care team if you are not sure about your medications.
- **It is important to take your medications regularly and as told by your health care provider.**

What do I do if I have questions?

- If you have any questions, talk to a member of your health care team, like your pharmacist, nurse practitioner, nurse, or doctor.

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find all patient education resources here:
www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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Why is medication safety important for people with kidney disease?

- People with kidney disease often take many medications.
- These medications can help with your kidney disease and other medical conditions like high blood pressure (also called hypertension) or diabetes.
- Your kidneys work to remove many medications from your body. If you have kidney disease, some medications are not removed and may build up in your body. This can hurt your kidneys.

How can I make sure my medications are safe for my kidneys?

- Tell each of your health care providers that you have kidney disease. **Do not** assume that they already know.
- When you are prescribed a new medication, ask if it is safe to take with kidney disease.
- Please tell your pharmacist you have kidney disease so they can make sure your medications and doses (amounts) are safe for you.

What about non-prescription medications?

- Always check with your pharmacist or health care team before taking any over-the-counter medications, including herbal or natural health products, vitamins, or supplements.
- If you have kidney disease, non-prescription medications can also build up in your body. Some of these may hurt your kidneys.

What will happen if a medication is not safe for my kidneys?

- Your pharmacist or health care provider may lower the dose of the medication, or change your prescription to a safer medication.

What do I need to know about my medications?

- It is important to know:
 - › Which medications you are taking and how to take them
 - › What each medication is used for
 - › What side effects to expect and what to do if you have any side effects
 - › How to store each medication