

Medications on Time, Every Time

Pills on time is a crucial concept in Parkinson's management. Pills are scheduled at a particular time of day to minimize symptoms as much as possible. Pills given late can lead to greater difficulties for the person with Parkinson's. To make sure your loved one gets his or her medications on schedule, it is necessary to keep everything organized.

General Tips

» **Make sure you keep an updated list** (name, dose, frequency and purpose of the medication; see "Medications and Schedule" worksheet on page 64 for an easy-to-follow format). Share this list at each medical appointment.

» **Set up medications in a weekly pill box with a secure lid.**

- If medication dosing is 4 times daily or less, you can purchase a weekly pill box with 4 compartments per day. Try to find one with a removable strip for each day, so the day's medications can be easily carried with you when you leave home.
- If dosing is more than 4 times daily, consider purchasing seven weekly pill boxes, using one box for each day. Tape over the days of the week and write down medication dose times.
- Place all medications into pill boxes, including over-the-counter medications.
- Some pharmacies can package medications and will send them to your home on a monthly basis. All medications are organized into individual packets labeled with medication day, date and time to be taken. Check with your pharmacy to see if this is available and if there is a charge for the service. You can also visit www.pillpack.com or call 1-855-745-5725 to arrange for pill delivery.



- » **Store all medication bottles and pill boxes in a secure place** where they will not be mistaken for food.
- » **Set a reminder for pill times.**
 - A kitchen timer works well at home.
 - When you are out, a cell phone timer or a watch with a vibrating alarm are good options.
- » When the alarm sounds indicating pill time, **stop what you are doing and give the medication right away.**
- » **When away from home, carry your loved one's daily pills with you.**

A long wait at an appointment, heavy traffic or other delay could mean that the next dose is needed before you get home.
- » **Check with the Parkinson's doctor before adding new prescriptions or over-the-counter medications** to your loved one's daily schedule. If the person with Parkinson's takes an MAO-B inhibitor (rasagiline, selegiline), some over-the-counter medications may not be safe.
- » **Avoid giving multi-symptom over-the-counter medications to your loved one if he or she has a cough or cold.** For example, if the person with Parkinson's has a cough, give medicine for one symptom – the cough – not cough medicine plus decongestant or other ingredient.
- » **Do not suddenly stop PD medications for an extended period of time.**

For detailed information about the different types of medications used to treat Parkinson's motor and non-motor symptoms, read *Parkinson's Disease: Medications*. You can order a free copy by calling 1-800-4PD-INFO (473-4636) or visiting Parkinson.org/books. You can also download the PDF for free.



WATCH THE VIDEO

Medications and General Health, Part 1

Online at Parkinson.org/videos in the "CareMAP How-to Videos" playlist