

Health Facts

Getting Informed About the Drugs You're Taking

It's always a good idea to talk with your doctor and pharmacist about the prescription drugs you are taking. However, it's also important to take responsibility for finding information yourself about these drugs. That's especially the case given the recent events where prescription drugs previously thought to be safe are now seen as being very risky. Fortunately, more consumer-friendly information is available today than ever before – both in print and on the internet – to help you learn about the side-effects, contraindications, and risks and benefits of particular prescription drugs.



The bible of drug-related information is the “Physicians’ Desk Reference” (“PDR”). This book is primarily intended for physicians, but it can still be a good place to find detailed information. Most public libraries will have a copy. While the PDR is a great resource, it's hard to beat the internet for immediate, up-to-date, and consumer-friendly information. So take advantage of these resources to get more informed about the drugs you are taking:

- ❑ www.gettingwell.com > Drug Information – The consumer website of the Physicians’ Desk Reference (PDR), this site provides drug information in lay terms that is based on the FDA-approved information in drug package inserts.
- ❑ www.drugdigest.org -- This noncommercial health information site is maintained by Express Scripts, a large pharmacy benefits manager.
- ❑ <http://medlineplus.gov> > Drug Information – As always, medlineplus.gov has great information on health care issues.
- ❑ www.mayoclinic.org > Drugs & Supplements – This site has a lot of helpful information about prescription drugs.
- ❑ www.epocrates.com – If you have a palm pilot, you can download free software at this site with information on side effects and drug interactions.
- ❑ www.fda.gov -- The website of the U.S. Food and Drug Information has excellent consumer information and links.

This is by no means an exhaustive list, and there are other resources that you may find useful. As always, just make sure that the online health information on which you are relying is accurate, unbiased, and can be verified.