



10 Ways To Be MedWise Arkansas



The more than 100,000 over-the-counter (OTC) drugs you can buy without a prescription all have one thing in common: they are serious medicines that need to be taken with care. That's why it's important to be a MedWise Arkansan every time you buy and use an OTC drug.

Here are ten simple ways to get the most from your OTC medicines:

1. Always start by reading the label – all of it.

Reading the label will help you decide if you have selected the right product for your symptoms, understand the dosing instructions and are aware of any warning that may apply to you.

2. Look for an OTC medicine that will treat only the symptoms you have.

The formulations of OTC drugs are very specific and should not be mixed and matched.

3. Know what to avoid while taking an OTC medicine.

Like prescription medicines, some OTC drugs can cause side effects or reactions. Read the label to see what to avoid while you are taking an OTC drug.

4. When in doubt, ask before you buy or use an OTC medicine.

Taking an OTC medicine safely is too important for guesswork. If you have questions, ask your pharmacist or doctor.

5. Take the medicine EXACTLY as stated on the label.

When it comes to OTC medicines, more is not better! Taking too much of a nonprescription medicine can be harmful. Only take the recommended amount and at the exact intervals stated on the label.

6. Use extra caution when taking more than one OTC drug product at a time.

Many OTC medicines contain the same active ingredients, which means you may be getting more than the recommended dose without even knowing it. Always compare active ingredients before taking more than one OTC medicine at the same time.

7. Don't combine prescription medicines and OTC drugs without talking to your doctor first.

Sometimes combining drugs can cause adverse reactions, or one drug can interfere with the other drug's effectiveness. Always ask your doctor or pharmacist to play it safe.

8. Make sure each of your doctors has a list of all the medicines you are taking.

This includes not only prescription medicines but also any OTC drugs and dietary supplements that you may be taking.

9. Always give infants and children OTC medicines that are especially formulated for their age and weight.

Unless labeled otherwise, adult-strength products should not be given to children; doing so could result in accidental overdosing. To be safe, don't cut adult tablets in half or estimate a child's dose of an adult-strength liquid product.

10. Don't use OTC medicines after their expiration date.

Dispose of all medicines promptly after their expiration date, and be careful not to throw them away where children or pets may find them.

BeMedWise is a public education initiative by the National Council on Patient Information and Education (NCPIE).

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