

- Follow your medical or mental health providers' directions regarding medicines
- Do not stop medicines without first checking with your medical or mental health provider
- Do not restart medicines without first checking with your doctor
- Do not skip or double up on your medicines

- Make sure your medicines have not expired.
- Check the dates!
- Check with your pharmacist before drinking alcohol when taking prescription medicines
- Tell your doctor about ALL medicines you are taking, including over-the-counter vitamins

Green Flags — All Clear

What this means:

If you:

- Have no side effects with medicine(s)
- Take your medicine(s) as prescribed
- Are getting your medicine(s) filled regularly

- Good work!
- Continue following up with your healthcare provider as recommended.

Keep up the great work!

Yellow Flags — Caution

What this means...

If you have any of the following:

- Problems taking your medicines as prescribed by your medical provider; missing or skipping doses
- Have difficulty understanding your medicine directions
- Trouble urinating, constipation or diarrhea
- Fatigue, weakness, dizziness, swelling of hands or feet
- Stomach upset or abdominal pain
- Dark, tarry stools, or noticeable blood in your stool
- Ringing in the ears or blurry vision
- Feeling "off balance"
- Excessively sleepiness
- "Foggy thinking"

- You may need further education or support on medication management
- You could be having a side effect to the medicine
- Your medicine(s) may need adjustment
- The medicine may be affecting your digestive system

Call your doctor, consulting nurse, or healthcare provider if symptoms do not improve.

Name:

Number:

Instructions:

If you notice a Yellow Flag, work closely with your health care team.

Red Flags—Stop and Think

What this means...

If you:

- Have loss of consciousness or fainting
- Develop a rash
- Cannot urinate
- Do not have a bowel movement, particularly when taking a narcotic for 3 or more days
- Blurred vision
- Vomiting blood

This indicates you need to be seen by a healthcare provider immediately.

Name:

Number:

Follow these instructions: **CALL 9-1-1.**

If you notice a Red Flag, call 9-1-1. Emergency!

Medicine Fast Facts

Becoming an Age-Friendly Health System provides a set of four evidence-based elements of high-quality care, known as the “4Ms,” to all older adults. The 4Ms represent a broad shift by health systems to focus on the needs of older adults. The 4Ms are Medication, Mentation, Mobility, and What Matters.

- About two-thirds of emergency hospitalizations among the elderly can be attributed to four commonly prescribed medicines/classes of medicines:
 1. Warfarin (Coumadin): accounted for 33% of the cases.
 2. Insulin: accounted for 14% of the cases.
 3. Oral antiplatelet medicines: accounted for 13%
 4. Oral antidiabetic medicines: accounted for 11% of the cases.
- Certain medicines require blood testing and dosing changes. Work closely with your doctor to ensure you are having the necessary blood testing as recommended.
- Prescription medicines can improve the symptoms of a disorder and improve the quality of life; however, they also have the potential to cause dangerous side effects. Since our bodies change with age, medicine may affect you differently. You may need to change dosages, how often you take it and how long you take it. Your brain and nervous system become more sensitive over time. If you are taking certain medicines, particularly pain medicines and sleeping medicines, you need careful monitoring.



- Liver and kidney function decline as you age making it more difficult to clear medications from your body. Therefore, you may need a lower dose of medicine over time.
- Many medications that treat anxiety, depression, other mental health conditions, allergies, nausea, and pain may cause sedation, confusion, and other side effects. Take medicines only as prescribed.
- Usually, medicines should be taken with a full glass of water, unless your doctor or pharmacist recommends otherwise.
- Follow directions as to “how” your medicine(s) should be taken. For example, if instructed to take with food this may help to improve absorption or reduce side effects such as upset stomach or bleeds. Talk with your doctor or pharmacist when you have questions.
- List all your medications—including over-the-counter medications, vitamins, and supplements—with the name, dose, how often it is taken, and why you take it. Carry this list with you whenever you visit a healthcare provider or pharmacist so they can check for drug interactions.

Southeast Washington Aging and Long Term Care

At Aging and Long Term Care, we believe every adult deserves to live with dignity. We connect seniors, adults with disabilities and family caregivers to a full range of free and other community resources designed to offer you choice, improve your quality of life and respect your independence.

For more information, call Information and Assistance

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Benton County: 509-735-0315 **Franklin County:** 509-412-1013

Kittitas County: 509-925-8765 **Walla Walla County:** 509-529-6470

Columbia County: 509-382-4787 **Garfield County:** 509-843-3563

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