

Additional Tools for Treatment Success

Maintain a list of current medications

Please fill out a list of all the medications that you take, including medications that you buy without a prescription. As your medications are stopped or changed, make sure to update your medication list. You should carry it with you at all times, especially to doctor or clinic visits. Your health care providers may use this information to make decisions about your treatment plan.

Importance of maintaining an accurate medication list

It is important to maintain the most current medication list so that your providers may suggest the best treatment plan. Many medications interact with other drugs, food or herbal products. All of your doctors should know all of the medications you are taking. In order to prevent unwanted interactions, show your medication list to your health care provider at each office visit.

Strategies to remember your medication



Use a weekly pillbox. Fill your pillbox at the beginning of each week with all of your medications.



Create a daily ritual. Keep your medication visible by placing it near something you use every morning, like your coffee maker.



Set an alarm. Use a daily alarm, especially if your medications have strict timing requirements.



Set up electronic reminders. Create email or text alerts to signal it's time to take your medication.



Get help from a loved one. Ask your family members for help remembering to take your medications.

Patient Safety

Hand-washing instructions

Infections are serious, and the best way to avoid getting an infection is to wash your hands often. Germs can be found in all areas of the home. They are also found on the body, especially the hands. It is very important to always wash your hands before and after you prepare or handle any medication.

Always wash your hands before:

- Tending to a sick person
- Treating a cut or wound
- Touching or eating food

Follow these simple steps when washing your hands:

1. Collect the supplies:
 - Soap
 - Paper towels or a clean cloth towel
2. Wet your hands with warm water.
3. Place a small amount of soap on your hands.
4. Rub your hands briskly together for at least 30 seconds. Don't forget to clean between your fingers and under your nails.
5. Rinse your hands under warm, running water.
6. Dry hands with a paper towel or clean cloth towel.
7. Use a paper towel to turn off the faucet and open the door
8. If you touch anything (for example, your hair), sneeze into your hands or feel that your hands may no longer be clean, wash your hands again before continuing with care.

Hand Sanitizers

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to reduce the number of germs on them. However, alcohol-based hand sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs when running water is not available. Hand sanitizers are not effective when hands are visibly dirty.

How to use hand sanitizers properly:

- Apply the product to the palm of one hand
- Rub your hands together
- Rub the product over all surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry

Adverse Drug Reactions

Patients experiencing adverse drug reactions, acute medical symptoms or other problems should contact their doctor or local emergency room, or call 911.

What to do with Home-Generated Biomedical Waste

Home-generated biomedical waste is any type of syringe, lancet or needle (“sharps”) used in the home to either inject medication or draw blood. Special care must be taken with the disposal of these items to protect you and your family from injury, and to keep the environment clean and safe.

The Johns Hopkins Specialty Pharmacy provides all patients who use needles and syringes with an appropriate sized sharps container for disposal. Please follow these simple rules to ensure your safety during your therapy:

Sharps

After using your injectable medication, place all needles, syringes, lancets and other sharp objects into a sharps container. Do not dispose of sharps in the trash unless they are contained within a sharps container. Do not flush them down the toilet. If a sharps container is not available, a hard plastic or metal container with a screw-on top or other securable lid could be used (for example, an empty hard can or liquid detergent container). Before discarding, reinforce the top with heavy-duty tape. Do not use clear plastic or glass containers. Containers should be no more than three-quarters full.

Disposal

Check with your local waste collection service or public health department to confirm that these disposal procedures for sharps containers are acceptable in your area. You can also ask your doctor’s office about the possibility of disposing these items in their office during your next office visit. Please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Safe Community Needle disposal website at <http://www.cdc.gov/needledisposal/> for more information.

Needle-stick Safety

- Never replace the cap on needles.
- Throw away used needles immediately after use in a sharps disposal container.
- Plan for the safe handling and disposal of needles before using them.
- Report all needle stick or sharps-related injuries promptly to your doctor.



General Home Safety – Patient Education

Our homes can be full of hidden safety hazards. Each year thousands of people suffer from preventable injuries and deaths in the home. We have provided some suggestions to help you prevent injuries within your home. Check every room in your house to make sure your home is safe.

Falling

Falling is the most common way that people get hurt at home. The symptoms of certain medical conditions and side effects from some medications may increase the chance for falls. Follow the precautionary steps listed below to reduce the chance of falling in your home.

- Keep the floor clean and promptly clean up spills.
- If you use throw rugs, place them over a rug liner or choose rugs with non-skid backs.
- Use a non-slip mat or install adhesive strips in your tub or shower.
- Tuck away telephone, computer and electrical cords out of walkways.
- All stairs and steps need handrails. If you have stairs in your home and have children, place baby gates at the top and bottom of the stairs.
- Have all walkways well lit and use night-lights as needed.
- Always have a working flashlight available.

Poisoning

When medications are not taken as directed, they can be dangerous. Medications should only be taken by the person named on the prescription. Here are some tips to avoid poisoning accidents:

- Store medications in their original containers.
- Keep all hazardous materials and liquids out of reach of children.
- Use child-resistant packaging; replace container caps tightly.
- Never refer to medication as “candy” in front of children.
- Know your local poison control number or dial 800-222-1222 if a poisoning is suspected.
- Store the poison control number on or near your phone.

Emergency Preparedness

It is very important to be prepared for an emergency. Planning ahead involves such steps as:

- Knowing the evacuation routes in your area
- Having emergency kits available in your home and in your car
- Keeping extra water and food on hand
- Maintaining an up-to-date emergency contact list
- Keeping your medication stocked and having a safe place to store your medications
- Storing important documents in a safe place

You can find more information about emergency preparedness at www.redcross.org

In the event of an emergency, contact the police or call 911.

General Home Safety – Patient Education

Fire and Burn Prevention

- Have smoke detectors in the home, and replace batteries at least once a year.
- Test each smoke detector once a month.
- Have a fire plan and be sure all family members know what to do in case of a fire.
- Place covers over electrical outlets.
- Make sure your water heater is not set higher than 120°F.
- Keep children away from the stove and never leave the stove unattended while cooking.
- Keep matches and lighters out of reach of children.

Fire

- Rescue anyone from immediate danger.
- If you are safe, alert the fire department. Otherwise evacuate the area.
- Turn off oxygen (if applicable) and try to contain the fire by closing off any access, such as shutting doors.
- Attempt to extinguish the fire only if it is in a small, localized area, otherwise evacuate the building and notify the fire department once you are safe.
- If relocation is necessary, please contact the Johns Hopkins Specialty Pharmacy to provide your updated contact information and new medication delivery location to ensure there is no lapse in therapy.



General Home Safety – Patient Education

Natural Disasters (Flood, Earthquake, or Tornado)

- In disaster-prone areas, store away food and extra bottled water. Have a battery-operated radio, flashlights and extra batteries available. If you are on a nebulized medication or other medication that requires electricity to administer, please call your local electric company to report your special needs for a backup generator.
- Check for injuries.
- Check your home for any gas or water leaks and turn off appropriate valves.
- Stay away from windows or broken glass. Wear shoes at all times.
- Evacuate the area, if necessary.
- If relocation is necessary, please contact the Johns Hopkins Specialty Pharmacy to provide your updated contact information and new medication delivery location to make sure there is no lapse in therapy.

Power Outage

Notify your gas and electric companies if there is a loss of power. Report any special needs for a backup generator to the electric and gas companies. Have battery-operated radio, flashlights, and batteries available. If you are on oxygen, turn it off before lighting candles.

Winter Storm

1. Prepare an emergency kit with:
 - Water
 - Nonperishable food
 - Battery-operated radio
 - Flashlights and fresh batteries
 - First-aid kit, including prescription medication
2. Keep your cell phone fully charged.
3. Do NOT use your stove for heat. If your power goes out, use these items for warmth:
 - Extra blankets, sleeping bags or warm winter coats, gloves and hats.
 - A wood-burning fireplace. Keep a supply of dry firewood during winter months.
4. Never use a charcoal grill or portable gas camp stove inside your home. Both of these items produce deadly fumes.
5. Avoid using candles since they can lead to house fires. Never leave lit candles unattended.

Information for patients receiving infusion therapy

The Johns Hopkins Specialty Pharmacy will make every effort to deliver your supplies early if a weather warning is in place. A Johns Hopkins Specialty Pharmacy representative will attempt to call you - in order of disaster priority - with any special instructions. Go to the nearest hospital for assistance if the power fails (electricity is required to operate your pump) and you cannot reach your home health nurse or a Johns Hopkins Specialty Pharmacy representative for infusion supplies or medication.