

## Using and storing medications safely

If you're like most people, there's probably a prescription bottle in your home with your name on it. Each month, many Americans take at least one prescription drug. When used as directed, medicines can help relieve pain and treat disease. But sometimes people take medicines the wrong way. When that happens, you could get very sick.



Photo above by Wasan Tita, below by Londoneye, courtesy iStockphoto

### Quick facts on medication use:

**1** Be sure to listen to your doctor and follow label directions on proper use of your medications. Always tell your health care team about any side effects you experience. These might be drowsiness, stomach pain or dry mouth.



**2** Sometimes two drugs or supplements don't work well together. For example, vitamin E can increase bleeding, a problem if you're on a blood thinner. Tell your doctor all the medications you are taking.

**3** If you take multiple medicines, a pill organizer can help you take the proper dose at the right time on the right day.



**4** Storing medicines in a locked cabinet or container can stop children from getting their hands on them.

**5** Disposing of unused or expired prescription medicines is important for safety. The action can reduce the risk of other people misusing the medications, either on purpose or by mistake.

>> For more information, visit [www.cdc.gov/medication-safety](http://www.cdc.gov/medication-safety)