



Memory Aids for Taking Medicines

This handout describes and shows several products that can help you organize your medicines and remember to take them.

It is important to take your medicines as prescribed every day. Using a system, like a chart or one of the products described in this handout, can help you:

- Remember to take your medicines
- Avoid taking your medicines twice
- Remember to bring your medicines with you when you go on a trip
- Keep your medicines organized

Pill Boxes (Medisets)

Figure 1 shows a pill box or medisets that holds 7 days' worth of medicines. This will work well if you take just a few medicines at the same time each day. It costs about \$1 to \$5. The price depends on the size of the compartments. You can buy products like this at your local drugstore.

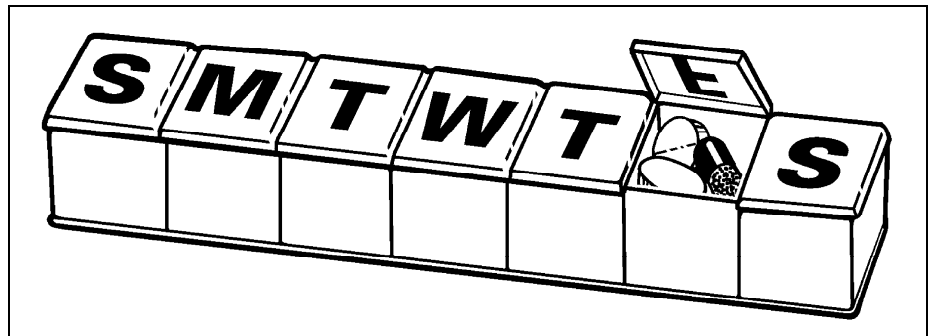


Figure 1: Weekly pill box or medisets with single compartments.

Other Handy Tips

- Keep medicines near objects you use regularly, like your toothbrush.
- Use a medicine chart that can be checked off after each dose is taken.
- Bring your medicines with you to your doctor or pharmacist visits.
- Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you stop taking a medicine, think the dose needs to be changed, or if you have missed doses.

Figure 2 shows a pill box that holds 7 days' worth of medicines, with 4 compartments for each day. This works well if you take many medicines at different times of the day. Also, you can remove a box to take a day's worth of medicine with you when you plan to be away from home. You can buy this box at your local drugstore.

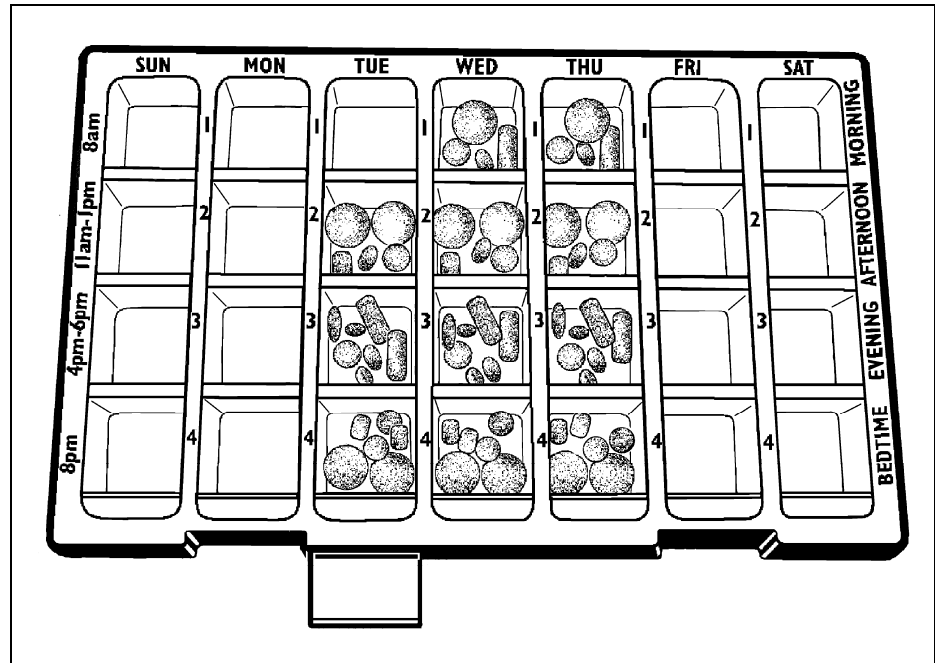


Figure 2: Weekly pill box or mediset with 4 compartments for each day.

Alarms

Alarms can be set to beep, flash, or verbally tell you when you need to take your medicines. One kind has 7 slide trays, with 4 compartments in each one, and lets you set 4 alarms a day.

Products like this one are not often available in drugstores. You can buy them online through one of these Web sites:

- www.forgettingthepill.com
- www.epill.com
- www.healthaccessories.com

Alarms cost about \$15 to \$35.

Questions?

Call 206-598-7498

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns.

Anticoagulation Clinics:

- University of Washington Medical Center:
206-598-4874
- Seattle Cancer Care Alliance:
206-288-6756
- Harborview Medical Center:
206-744-2976

Pagers

Figure 3 shows a pager that beeps or vibrates to tell you to take your medicines. The display will tell you exactly what to take. You may buy this service at www.epill.com or at other Web sites for a monthly cost of about \$15.



Figure 3: Pager.

What if I forget to take my pills?

Even when you use a memory aid for taking medicines, you might forget to take your pills. Keep in mind that instructions for missed doses vary depending on the medicine.

If you forget to take a pill, follow the instructions you were given about missed doses for that medicine. If you are not sure what to do, call your pharmacist or health care provider.

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
MEDICAL CENTER
UW Medicine

 SEATTLE
CANCER CARE
ALLIANCE

HARBORVIEW
MEDICAL
CENTER 
UW Medicine

UWMC Anticoagulation Clinic

Box 356015
1959 NE Pacific St. Seattle, WA 98195
206-598-4874

Seattle Cancer Care Alliance is a collaboration
of Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center,
UW Medicine, and Seattle Children's