

UW Medicine



Memory Aids for Taking Medicines

Helpful products and tips

This handout describes and shows some products that you can use to organize your medicines and help you 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 take your medicines with you when you go on a trip
- Keep your medicines organized

Pill Boxes (Medisets)

Figure 1 shows a pill box (mediset) with 1 compartment for each day of the week. This will work well if you take just a few pills 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.

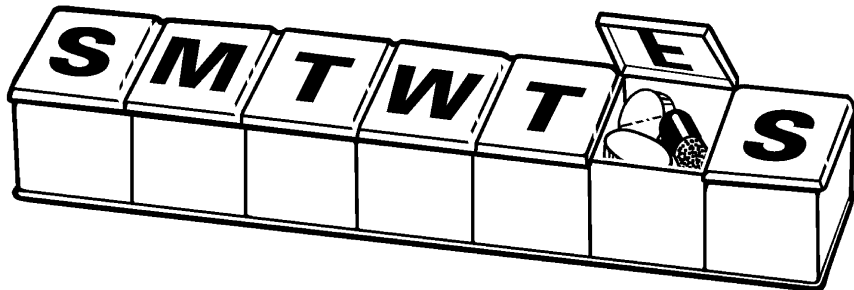


Figure 1: Weekly pill box with 1 compartment for each day of the week

Figure 2 shows a pill box that has 4 compartments for each day of the week. 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 a box like this at your local drugstore.

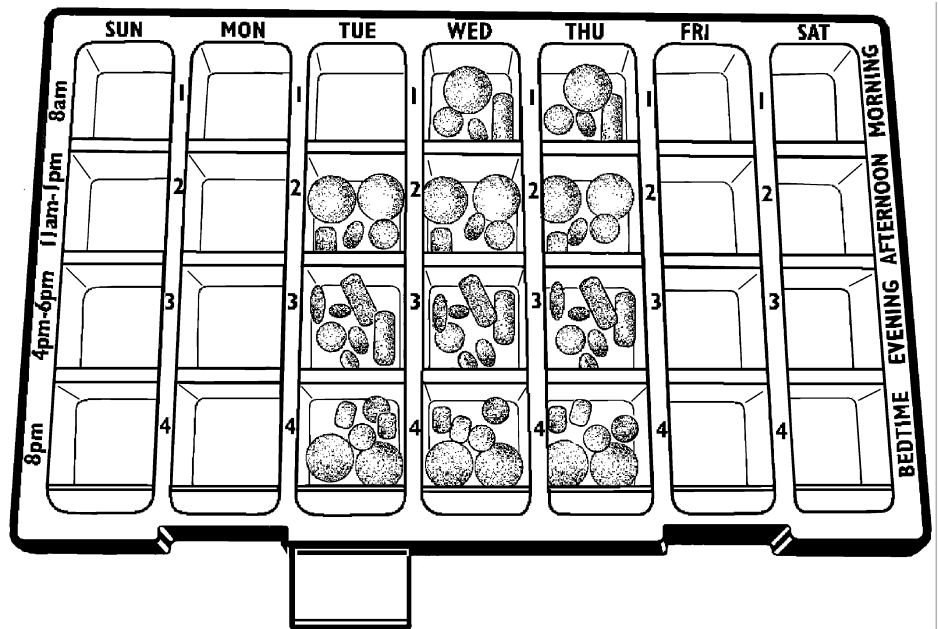


Figure 2: Weekly pill box (mediset) with 4 compartments for each day of the week

Alarms

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

Alarms are not often found in drugstores. You can buy them online through one of these websites:

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

Alarms cost about \$15 to \$35.



Figure 3: Pager

Pagers

Figure 3 shows a pager that beeps or vibrates to tell you to take your medicines. The display will tell you exactly what medicine to take. You may buy this device for about \$15 at www.epill.com/vpager.html or other websites. It runs on batteries. You will need to program it with your medicine schedule.

Other Tips

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

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.

If you forget to take a pill:

- Follow the instructions you were given about missed doses for that medicine. Instructions for missed doses vary depending on the medicine.
- If you are not sure what to do, call your pharmacist or healthcare provider.

Questions?

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

Anticoagulation Clinics:

- University of Washington Medical Center: 206.598.4874
- Harborview Medical Center: 206.744.2976
- Seattle Cancer Care Alliance: 206.288.6756