

# Questions To Ask a Doctor or Pharmacist

Take this with you to your doctor or pharmacist.

- What is the name of the medicine I have been prescribed?
- Is there a generic form of the drug? If so, what is it called?
- Why am I taking it?
- Do I really need it?
- What are the side effects? Which should I report immediately?
- How often should I take the medication?
- How much do I take?
- What should I do if I miss a dose?
- Are there any special precautions I should be aware of?
- Can I drink alcohol with this medication?
- How should my medication be stored?
- Is it addictive? Does it need to be locked up?
- How hard would it be to come off the medication?
- When should I take the drug? What time of day? Do I have to take a dose at night? Should I take it with or without food?
- When can I stop taking this drug?
- May I drive while taking this drug?
- What other medications should I not take (over the counter or prescription) while taking this medication?
- Are there any blood tests I will need to get before, during or after taking the medication?



\*\* Adapted from *Get Connected – SAMHSA Resource for Older Adults*

\*\* Contributions by Eric Collins, MD Physician-in-Chief, Silver Hill Hospital

# Signs of Possible Prescription Painkiller Addiction

Physical withdrawal after stopping prescription painkillers (opioids) can occur after just two weeks of daily use and, for individuals who have previously been dependent on opioids, after only 3-4 days of consecutive use.

1. Running out of the medication early.
2. Visiting multiple doctors and/or driving long distances to obtain prescriptions for the drug. Preoccupation with obtaining the medication.
3. Prolonged use of the medication even after the pain or medical condition has improved.
4. Using the medication for reasons other than pain, e.g., to deal with stress or after an upsetting event or interaction.
5. Changes in personality such as diminished attention and concentration; drop in performance at work or school, shifts in energy or mood, social withdrawal.
6. Changes in daily habits or appearance such as poor hygiene or altered sleeping or eating patterns.
7. Powder residue around the nostrils, needle or track marks on the body.
8. Defensiveness about the person's actions; lashing out behaviors to simple, harmless questions; and secrecy.
9. Neglecting responsibilities by frequently calling in sick to work or by not keeping up with household chores, paying bills, etc.
10. "Pinpoint pupils", itching of the arms, legs; flushing of face/neck.

Source: Eric Collins, MD, Physician-in-Chief Silver Hill Hospital