

LIFESTYLE

LESSONS



Some Medications Don't Mix

Though prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) medications can be a saving grace for those who are ill, they can also cause serious and even fatal complications if they're taken incorrectly. Before taking OTC or prescription medications, it's best to discuss all potential side effects with your doctor to avoid unexpected consequences. Keep reading to learn about the potential dangers of medication interactions and how to avoid them.

According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, there are three types of drug interactions that you should be aware of.

- 1. Drug-drug interactions**—When taking two or more medications at the same time, you may experience negative side effects when the ingredients mix with one another. For example:
 - Antacids reduce the absorption rate for blood thinning medication.
 - Antihistamines can increase the effects of tranquilizers and some painkillers.
 - Antibiotics may lessen the effects of low-dose oral contraceptives by reducing hormone absorption.
- 2. Drug-food/beverage interactions**—At times, medications interact negatively with foods or beverages, such as mixing alcohol with some drugs. This causes your reaction time to worsen and may cause drowsiness.
- 3. Drug-condition interactions**—At times, taking medication while also suffering from an unrelated medical condition can cause adverse effects, such as taking a nasal decongestant while also suffering from high blood pressure.

If you are concerned about a drug interaction or experience unexpected side effects, consult your doctor or local pharmacist immediately.

Follow the Instructions

Beyond negative drug interactions, more than half of all medications are taken incorrectly because the person doesn't follow the drug's instructions for usage.

To avoid potentially harmful complications, always provide your doctor with complete information about your current symptoms, as well as any other prescriptions or OTC medications you are taking. Lastly, pay close attention to your doctor's instructions for how to take the medication and ask for clarification if you are confused by the directions.

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