Drug Reactions

URL of this page: http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/drugreactions.html

Most of the time, medicines make our lives better. They reduce aches and pains, fight infections, and control problems such as high blood pressure or diabetes. But medicines can also cause unwanted reactions.

One problem is interactions, which may occur between

- Two drugs, such as aspirin and blood thinners
- Drugs and food, such as statins and grapefruit
- Drugs and supplements, such as gingko and blood thinners
- Drugs and diseases, such as aspirin and peptic ulcers

Interactions can change the actions of one or both drugs. The drugs might not work, or you could get side effects.

Side effects are unwanted effects caused by the drugs. Most are mild, such as a stomach ache or drowsiness, and go away after you stop taking the drug. Others can be more serious.

Drug allergies are another type of reaction. They can be mild or life-threatening. Skin reactions, such as hives and rashes, are the most common type.

When you start a new prescription or over-the-counter medication, make sure you understand how to take it correctly. Know which other medications and foods you need to avoid. Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist if you have questions.

Start Here

- Avoiding Drug Interactions [http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/UCM096386] (Food and Drug Administration)
- Also available in Spanish [http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/ucm079505.htm]

Overviews

- Drug Allergy [http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/drug-allergy/DS01148/METHOD=print] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)

Latest News
• Baldness Drug Propecia May Put Some Men Off Alcohol
• Some Common Prescriptions Linked to Impotence

Diagnosis/Symptoms
  Also available in Spanish [http://www.aaaai.org/global/spanish-materials/Library/At-a-Glance/Anaphylaxis-Tips-to-Remember.aspx]
• Anaphylaxis-Like Reactions [http://www.nationaljewish.org/healthinfo/conditions/allergy/types/anaphylaxis/like-reactions.aspx] (National Jewish Health)

Treatment
• Anaphylaxis (Severe Allergic Reaction): First Aid [http://www.mayoclinic.com/print/first-aid-anaphylaxis/FA00003/METHOD=print] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)

Specific Conditions
• Aspirin Allergy: What Are the Symptoms? [http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/aspirin-allergy/AN01467/METHOD=print] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
• Grapefruit Juice and Medicine May Not Mix
  [http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm292276.htm] (Food and Drug Administration)
  Also available in Spanish [http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm293088.htm]
• Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome
• Penicillin Allergy [http://www.mayoclinic.com/print/penicillin-allergy/DS00620/DSECTION=all&METHOD=print] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
• Sulfur Allergy: Which Medications Should I Avoid? [http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/sulfur-allergy/AN01565/METHOD=print] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)

Related Issues
• Harmful Interactions: Mixing Alcohol with Medicines
  [http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/Medicine/medicine.htm] NIH Easy-to-Read (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism)
  Also available in Spanish [http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/MedSpanish/medicine.htm]
• Index to Drug-Specific Information
• Medication Errors: Cut Your Risk with These Tips [http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/medication-errors/MY00815/METHOD=print] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
• Medication Interactions: Food, Supplements and Other Drugs
  [http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/More/MyHeartandStrokeNews/Medication-Interactions-Food-Supplements-and-Other-Drugs_UCM_437377_Article.jsp] (American Heart Association)
  Also available in Spanish [http://familydoctor.org/familydoctor/es/drugs-procedures-devices/over-the-counter/otc-medicines-know-your-risks-and-reduce-them.printerview.all.html]
• Some Medications and Driving Don't Mix
  [http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm107894.htm] (Food and Drug Administration)
Pictures & Photographs

Videos
- Avoiding Drug Interactions [http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm182745.htm] (Food and Drug Administration)
- Don't Take This with That! [http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/SpecialFeatures/ucm341437] (Food and Drug Administration)

Clinical Trials

Journal Articles
References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

Dictionaries/Glossaries
  Also available in Spanish [http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/spanish/druginformation.html]

Organizations
- Food and Drug Administration [http://www.fda.gov]

Law and Policy
- MedWatch, the FDA Safety Information and Adverse Event Reporting Program [http://www.fda.gov/Safety/MedWatch/default.htm] (Food and Drug Administration)

Children

Seniors
- Medications Older Adults Should Avoid [http://www.healthinaging.org/resources/resource:medications-older-adults-should-avoid/] (AGS Foundation for Health in Aging)
Preventing Accidental Poisoning

Patient Handouts
  Also available in Spanish [http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/spanish/ency/article/000846.htm]
  Also available in Spanish [http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/spanish/ency/article/000819.htm]
  Also available in Spanish [http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/spanish/ency/article/000293.htm]
  Also available in Spanish [http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/spanish/ency/article/000765.htm]

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