



Managing your medications

Expect more from your Medco Cardiovascular Pharmacist

By David Pogue, R.Ph.

Call your Cardiovascular Pharmacist for a private medication checkup.

Find out more about managing your drug therapy.

There is never a cost to you for advice from a specialist pharmacist.

Just call the toll-free number on your prescription drug ID card.

Ask the pharmacist ...

- ✓ How can I help prevent my condition from getting worse in the future?
- ✓ If I feel fine, do I really need to take my medications?
- ✓ Do you have any tips on managing the side effects of my medications?
- ✓ Could we review what each medication does for me and how each one works?
- ✓ Do my medications work safely with my over-the-counter medications, vitamins, and diet?
- ✓ Are there any lower-cost treatment options that may be equally effective?

Just as there are specialists who are experts in specific medical conditions, Medco now has specialist pharmacists who focus on the care and treatment of people with one or more ongoing medical conditions.

Raising the bar

I myself am a Medco Cardiovascular Pharmacist, specially trained in the medications used to treat hypertension (high blood pressure) and related cardiovascular conditions. My job is to partner with you and your doctor to help provide an advanced level of personalized pharmacy care—as part of your health professionals’ “circle of care.” You get the benefit of expert, specialized knowledge in conditions including heart attack, heart failure, and risk of stroke—plus the experience and understanding gained from caring for patients every day who have similar medical concerns. I can offer you and your doctor important insights into how others have reacted to certain treatments ... support your doctors in helping ensure that your medications work safely for you ... and even suggest drug therapies that may save you money.

Seeing the big picture

We consider potentially harmful interactions with other drugs you may be taking—but we also look at how your current medications could affect any other medical conditions you may have. I can contact your doctor to discuss aspects of your medical history that may impact your treatment ... discuss any potential concerns I see ... and call you if there may be any change in your medication regimen.

Helping patients do the right thing

Many people take heart medications for blood pressure. Even if you feel fine, high blood pressure can be serious, and can lead to a heart attack or stroke.

The good news is that lowering your blood pressure with medication can help reduce your risk of ...

- > Heart attack by up to one-quarter
- > Stroke by more than one-third
- > Heart failure by over one-half

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You may not have high blood pressure and may take heart medications for other reasons. Taking the medication as directed can still improve the benefits you receive, such as:

- > Reduced risk of hospitalization or death from heart failure
- > Improved survival rate and decreased likelihood of future heart attacks if you've already had one
- > Reduced chest pain and fewer heart attacks

These are just a few of the reasons that you should take your medication as prescribed.

Working behind the scenes

If a potential problem arises with a prescription of yours, it's immediately brought to the attention of a Medco Cardiovascular Pharmacist, who then reviews and evaluates your entire medication profile on record. The pharmacist may need to consult your doctor about your condition or medications. Once they resolve any issues, the Cardiovascular Pharmacist or your doctor will follow up with you if there is going to be change to your treatment.

Educating members

Specialist pharmacists are also educators. We'll always take the time to explain how a medication works. But in addition to applying our knowledge of medications, we're very familiar with members' prescription drug plans. We can help you understand your overall plan and answer specific questions regarding your co-payments, mail-order services, or generics—even how to save money by considering effective, lower-cost drug alternatives for your long-term medications.

Getting the most out of your pharmacy benefit ... at no additional cost

One of the advantages of having a Medco Cardiovascular Pharmacist help you manage your medications is that there's no extra cost for this advanced level of care—it's already part of your prescription drug benefit. And although I specialize in medications used to treat cardiovascular disease, I'm also a licensed general pharmacist who can help you with any of your other medication needs. When appropriate, I can also put you in touch with any of our other Specialist Pharmacists.

Accumulating knowledge

I have been a pharmacist for many years and have received concentrated training in the medications used to treat cardiovascular conditions. And like all Medco pharmacists, I review the most up-to-date guidelines from National Institutes of Health. We also review your medications and work with your doctor to make sure you are receiving medications recommended by the most current guidelines to help control your condition. My colleagues and I regularly share what we've learned through our experience; knowing how my peers are dealing with similar conditions is stimulating as well as informative. It reminds me what an amazing, complex field pharmacology is—and refuels my passion for the important services we perform for you!

Connecting with us is easy

To speak with me or one of my colleagues, call the toll-free number on your prescription drug ID card. You can reach a Cardiovascular Pharmacist 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

To meet other Medco Specialist Pharmacists and read about how they've helped patients with their medications, visit www.medcospecialists.com. You may also want to visit www.americanheart.org, the website of the American Heart Association. And the Health and Wellness section of medco.com® is a great resource for information about your condition—including the latest developments.

Medco specialist pharmacists have a degree in pharmacy and have a license in the state in which they practice. Besides answering your questions, Diabetes Pharmacists can identify potential health risks such as side effects, unsafe drug interactions, untreated symptoms, dosing that's too high or too low, and incompatible drug selection.

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