
Managing Your Medications

Medicines and falls

The more medications you take, the higher the risk of a fall.

Some sleeping medications and those for anxiety and depression have been proven to increase your risk for falls. These drugs may affect reaction time or concentration or make you slightly drowsy, which may increase falls risk.

- In general, if a drug says “Caution with driving,” you should assume it also means “Caution with walking.”
- If you have falls risk factors, such as muscle weakness, trouble with balance or walking, or vision problems, be cautious about taking medications that increase falls risk.

Know your medication dosage

In general, the higher the dose, the higher the risk for side effects.

Dosages for older adults are often about half of what they are for younger adults.

- As people get older, they often need a lower dosage to get the desired effect.
- As people age, they are more likely to experience side effects. A dose that was not a problem when you were younger can be too high and cause side effects when you're older.
- Always find the lowest dose you need to get the benefit. Re-evaluate to see if the drug is still needed. Ask your doctor if there is a safer alternative.

Talk to your doctor

Don't stop a prescription medication without talking to your doctor!

Do ask your doctor to check your medications to see if there are any for which you can lower the dose. Be sure to tell your doctor about any alternative (herbal) or over-the-counter medicines you are taking.

Sleeping Better

Sleeping pills

It is best to avoid taking sleeping pills if you can. The possible side effects are:

- Daytime hangover effects
- Daytime sleepiness
- Falls and confusion
- More sleep problems

How to sleep better

1. Go to bed when you are ready to sleep.
2. Have a bedtime ritual — do the same thing each night.
3. Avoid coffee and other drinks and foods that are stimulants.
4. Make sure you're exercising regularly.
5. If you cannot sleep at night, read or do some quiet activity. This works best if you don't stay in bed. Get up if you can, and if it's not too cold.
6. Avoid daytime naps.
7. Use the bedroom just for sleeping and sexual activity.
8. Keep clock faces turned away and try not to check the time when you awaken during the night.
9. Have a special "worry time" before you go to sleep.
10. Get enough sunlight during the day — natural light helps with sleep/night cycles.

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11. Try relaxation or other special ways of helping you sleep. Check your local library for relaxation tapes.
12. Try not to worry about not sleeping.
13. Make sure you're comfortable. If you're in pain, consider taking acetaminophen. Make sure the room is comfortable; the room should be cool and quiet or have "white" noise (background noise, like the humming of a fan), and the mattress and pillows should feel comfortable.

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Food Sources of Calcium	
Non-Dairy	Milligrams
Fortified ready-to-eat cereals (various), 1 oz	236–1043
Soy beverage, calcium fortified, 1 c	368
Sardines, Atlantic, in oil, drained, 3 oz	325
Tofu, firm, (prepared with calcium sulfate & magnesium chloride), 1/2 c	253
Pink salmon, canned, with bone, 3 oz	181
Collards, cooked from frozen, 1/2 c	178
Molasses, blackstrap, 1 Tbsp	172
Spinach, cooked from frozen, 1/2 c	146
Soybeans, green, cooked, 1/2 c	30
Turnip greens, cooked from frozen, 1/2 c	124
Ocean perch, Atlantic, cooked, 3 oz	116
Oatmeal, plain and flavored, instant, fortified, 1 packet prepared	99–110
Cowpeas, cooked, 1/2 c	106
White beans, canned, 1/2 c	96
Kale, cooked from frozen, 1/2 c	90
Okra, cooked from frozen, 1/2 c	88

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Soybeans, mature, cooked, 1/2 c	88
Blue crab, canned, 3 oz	86
Beet greens, cooked from fresh, 1/2 c	8
Chinese cabbage, fresh, cooked, 1/2 c	79
Clams, canned, 3 oz	78
Dandelion greens, fresh, cooked, 1/2 c	74
Rainbow trout, farmed, cooked, 3 oz	73
Source: Nutrient values from Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Nutrient Database for Standard Reference http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document/html/appendixb.htm	

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Food Sources of Calcium	
Dairy	Milligrams
Plain yogurt, non-fat (13 g protein/8 oz), 8-oz container	452
Romano cheese, 1.5 oz	452
Pasteurized process Swiss cheese, 2 oz	438
Plain yogurt, low-fat (12 g protein/8 oz), 8-oz container	415
Fruit yogurt, low-fat (10 g protein/8 oz), 8-oz container	345
Swiss cheese, 1.5 oz	336
Ricotta cheese, part skim, 1/2 c	335
Processed American cheese food, 2 oz	323
Provolone cheese, 1.5 oz	321
Mozzarella cheese, part-skim, 1.5 oz	311
Cheddar cheese, 1.5 oz	307
Fat-free (skim) milk, 1 c	306
Muenster cheese, 1.5 oz	305
1% low-fat milk, 1 c	290
2% milk, 1 c or 2% chocolate milk, 1 c	285
Buttermilk, low-fat, 1 c	284

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Chocolate milk, 1 c	280
Whole milk, 1 c	276
Yogurt, plain, whole milk (8 g protein/8 oz), 8-oz container	275
Ricotta cheese, whole milk, 1/2 c	255
Blue cheese, 1.5 oz	225
Mozzarella cheese, whole milk, 1.5 oz	215
Feta cheese, 1.5 oz	210
Source: Nutrient values from Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Nutrient Database for Standard Reference http://www.ars.usda.gov/SP2UserFiles/Place/12354500/Data/SR23/nutrlist/sr23w301.pdf	