

A Note from the Parish Nurse

October – Medications:

"...The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." Revelation 22:2 NIV

Medications are used to maintain a certain level of health, prevent an illness, or cure a physical condition. For example when your doctor orders a drug for blood pressure or diabetes, a specific level of that drug needs to be in your system to attain the desired outcome. Therefore in order to reap the most benefit, it is important to understand why you need the medication, how to take it, how to store it, and what to expect from it.

Don't be afraid to ask questions because the more you know, the more compliant you will be with your treatment. Consider some of these questions. Why are you taking the drug? How will it affect you? Are there any side effects? Should you drive when you are taking the medication? How quickly will you see results? Do you need to take the entire prescription? Can you take the pill with something other than water? If you have difficulty taking pills you might even ask if it comes in another form.

Medications do not last forever so take them as directed and if the prescription is not to be completed, ask about an expiration date. Over-the-counter medications will have an expiration date printed on the box and bottle so check the cough medicine you bought last year before taking any this year. Out of date medicine will have lost its strength to combat your illness so check your cupboards regularly and dispose of old medications.

Also be aware of possible interactions that can occur between some foods and other drugs. Taking medication with hot drinks may change its chemical structure while alcohol will change its absorption. With certain cholesterol, blood pressure, or cardiac medications, you should never eat grapefruit or drink grapefruit juice as it will increase the blood level of the drug and cause adverse side effects. To be sure you do not create potentially harmful interactions, talk with your pharmacist about any items you should avoid.

Medications are to be helpful not hurtful. Learn as much as you can to get the greatest benefit from them.

(Source: US Food and Drug Administration, www.fda.gov/drugs)