

A Spoonful of Sugar

JULIE ANDREWS, 1964

Medicine can be a lifesaver when taken exactly as prescribed by your doctor/clinician. But as we get older, our bodies process medications differently. For many seniors, especially those who take multiple medications, managing side effects can be a definite challenge.

Common medication side effects include dry mouth, change in taste, loss of appetite, upset stomach or other gastrointestinal issues; headache, nerve joint or muscle pain; weight loss or gain; dizziness and falls, confusion or changes in memory.

Try these strategies to help the medicine go down in the most delightful way...

For change in taste, loss of appetite or stomach issues:

- Eat smaller meals several times a day.
- Try sugarless peppermint or ginger candy or chew gum.
- Avoid fried, greasy, sweet and spicy and high-fiber foods. Remember the BRAT diet (bananas, rice, applesauce and toast).
- Take medication with food, unless directed otherwise.
- Stay hydrated.

For dry mouth:

- Sip water or use a spray bottle. Try saliva substitute drops and sprays or dilute 4 drops of glycerin in 4 ounces of water.
- Keep sugarless hard candy handy. Look for citrus, cinnamon or mint candies containing aloe, xylitol, glycerin, and sugarless gum with baking soda.
- Add brothy, low-salt soups to your menu and avoid caffeine and alcohol, which are both diuretics.
- Use alcohol-free mouthwash.
- Apply lip balm.
- Add moisture to the air with a humidifier.

For dizziness or confusion:

- Stand up slowly and steady yourself before you begin walking.
- Use a walker, cane or grab bars for support.
- Install nightlights and keep walkways clear.
- Check your blood pressure and blood sugar.
- Stay hydrated.

Skipping a dose of prescribed medicine—even once in a while—is never a good idea!

Take all medicine exactly as prescribed. If you notice new side effects when you start a new medication, or when the dose changes, be sure to tell your Primary Care Team right away.




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**“One good thing about music.
When it hits you, you feel no pain.”**

— BOB MARLEY