

QUESTIONS TO ASK
If You are Taking Medication (#9)

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Before you start taking any medication:

- § Tell your doctor if you are on any other prescription medications and discuss possible interactions.
- § Tell your doctor if you have a family history of breast or ovarian cancer so that you can discuss the use of fertility drugs and any risk factors involved.
- § Ask about the generic version of the prescribed drug. Discuss the pros and cons of each.
- § Clarify the dose that you are to take. Check this for each cycle.
- § Clarify the amount of diluent to use when mixing medication for intramuscular injection. This is particularly important if you are to use more than one ampule (glass container) of medication for the required dosage.
- § Check the expiration date on the bottle of all medications.
- § Don't let medications get too cold or too hot; it can affect their potency.
- § If it is a medication to take by mouth, ask if it should be taken on a full or empty stomach.
- § Be aware that it is illegal to import fertility drugs from outside the United States. Medications made or purchased outside the USA for lower prices may not have FDA approval. In addition, if there is a problem with a particular batch of a drug, the FDA has no way to recall the drug. Consumers with questions about importation of drugs for personal use should consult with their local FDA office or the FDA Imports Operations Branch in Rockville, MD.
- § If you are considering giving unused, unopened bottles or ampules of medication to a friend, consider the liability issues if the medication caused an adverse reaction. It is better to give any unopened medications to your infertility practice; they can take full responsibility for dispensing it.

When you are taking medications:

- § If taking intramuscular medications, ask the nurse or doctor to give you a demonstration of the proper technique.
- § When giving an intramuscular injection in the buttock, use the upper, outer quadrant of the buttock to avoid irritating the sciatic nerve. You can ask the nurse to mark your skin indicating the best areas to use. Alternate sides for each injection.
- § Apply cold washcloth or ice cube to the site to lessen discomfort prior to the shot. Apply a warm cloth and rub the area afterward to enhance absorption.
- § If an injection site is sore and warm to the touch, do not use that area for injections for several days. If there is an area of red streaking in the skin around the injection site, notify your doctor. It could be indicative of localized inflammation.
- § When giving an intramuscular injection, always pull back slightly on the plunger before injecting the medication. If you have hit a vein, blood will appear in the syringe and you should not inject the medication. In that case, pull the needle out, change the needle, swab the new site with a disinfectant, and again pull back on the plunger before injecting the medication.
- § If you missed a dose of medication, never double the next one without consulting your doctor.
- § If you have any side effects from a medication, don't hesitate to call your doctor.
- § If you are taking vaginal suppositories, do not use tampons at that time as they will absorb the medication.

Further information on this topic is available through RESOLVE fact sheets. For a publications order form, please contact the local chapter or the National RESOLVE Office at 1310 Broadway, Somerville, MA 02144-1731, or call 617/623-0744.

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