

# Over-the-Counter Drugs

Over-the-counter (OTC) drugs are drugs you can buy without a prescription.

It is very important to read the label when using OTC drugs. It is the only way to know how to use the drug the right way.

FDA passed a law about labels on OTC drugs. The law says that all OTC products must have a new label called “Drug Facts.” This label will show people the best, safest way to use OTC drugs.

## How is the new label different?

- It will use common words that are easy to understand.
- The print will be bigger, making it easier to read.
- The label will look the same and be in the same place on every product.

## What will be on the label?

- Active ingredients—What is in the product that makes it work.
- Purposes—What the drug is for.
- Uses—What problems it is used to treat.
- Warnings—Who should not take the product, problems to watch out for.
- Directions—How much to take, when to take it.
- Inactive Ingredients—What else is in the product. People can see if they are allergic to something in the product.

## How will the new label help me?

- It will help you compare products and choose the best one for your illness.
- The product will work its best because you can use it the right way.
- You will have all the information you need to stay away from problems.



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**FDA Office of Women's Health** <http://www.fda.gov/womens>

## To Learn More:

**FDA Center for Drug Evaluation and Research**

<http://www.fda.gov/cder/otc/label/quesanswers.htm>

Phone: 1-888-INFO-FDA (1-888-463-6332)