

## ASK YOUR PHARMACIST

Your pharmacist is your medication expert and can provide advice and information on a wide range of health issues.

# Choosing Nonprescription Medication

Are you unsure about all the different products on your pharmacy's shelf? Choosing the right one can be difficult — your pharmacist can help you.

Nonprescription or over-the-counter (OTC) medications are used to treat minor illnesses and symptoms. Even though you don't need a prescription from your doctor, these medicines can harm you if taken the wrong way. They may not be the right medicine for you.

### Your Pharmacist Can...

- ◆ help you decide if it's safe to treat your symptoms by yourself or if you should see your doctor
- ◆ help you choose a medication that's best for you
- ◆ explain how to take the medicine, for how long, and tell you about common side effects
- ◆ talk to you about other ways to help you feel better and stay healthy

### Choosing Nonprescription Medications

Before recommending a product, your pharmacist will consider:

- ◆ your symptoms and how long you've had them
- ◆ what you have already tried to treat the problem

- ◆ if anything makes your symptoms better or worse
- ◆ allergies or other health problems you have
- ◆ other medicines you take to make sure they don't interact with each other

### Using Nonprescription Medications Safely

- ◆ Ask your pharmacist about the best relief for: coughs and colds, fever, allergies, pain, infections, stomach problems and others.
- ◆ Tell your pharmacist and doctor about all the medicines you use — prescription, nonprescription and herbal products.
- ◆ If you have asthma, high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes or are pregnant or breastfeeding, talk to your pharmacist or doctor before using any nonprescription product.

- ◆ Use nonprescription medications only for minor health problems. Don't use them for longer than recommended — you may have a more serious health problem that needs other treatment.
- ◆ Read the label carefully and follow the directions — the label tells you what you need to know to use the medication so it works and is safe. Ask if you're unsure.
- ◆ Many products are not for children — check the label or talk to your pharmacist.
- ◆ Know if you should avoid any foods, alcoholic drinks or other medicines when taking a nonprescription product.

**Ask your pharmacist for help in choosing a nonprescription medicine that is best for you.**

