

# What can you do?

**Book a special appointment with your health care professional to review your medications.**

What was good for you then may not be good for you now. That's why it's important to regularly review your medications with your doctor, pharmacist or nurse, especially if you take five or more medications.

Together, you may decide to **deprescribe** a medication. Deprescribing means reducing the dose or stopping a medication that may not be beneficial or may be causing harm.

## Questions to ask your doctor, pharmacist or nurse

1. Why am I taking this medication?
2. What are the potential benefits and harms of this medication?
3. Can it affect my memory or cause me to fall?
4. Can I stop or reduce the dose of this medication (i.e. deprescribing)?
5. Who do I follow up with and when?

**For more information on medication safety, visit the Canadian Deprescribing Network's website:**  
[deprescribingnetwork.ca](http://deprescribingnetwork.ca)

# As we get older, we should be careful with our medications

## Did you know?

Older adults are hospitalized five times more often than people under the age of 65 because of harmful medication effects<sup>1</sup>



### Reference


<sup>1</sup>Canadian Institute for Health Information. 2013. Adverse Drug Reaction-Related Hospitalizations Among Seniors, 2006 to 2011.



# As we age, our body becomes less efficient at processing medications

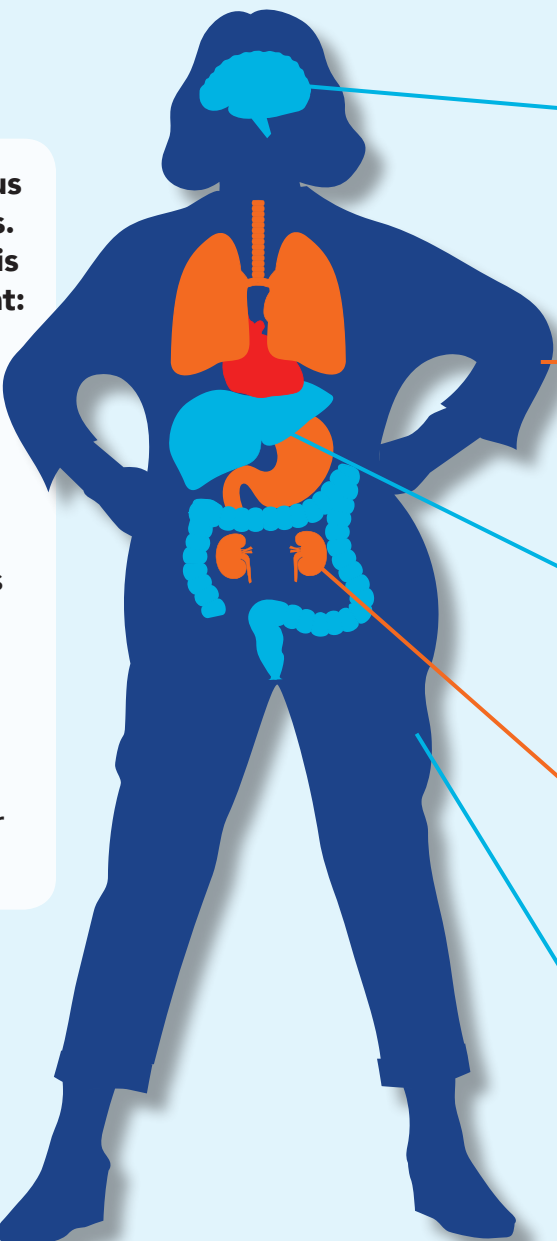
## How medications are processed in the body

### Medications are:

-  **1. Absorbed** into the body
-  **2. Distributed** throughout the body via the bloodstream
-  **3. Broken down** in the liver and kidneys
-  **4. Excreted** (i.e. eliminated from the body) through the urine and feces

Medications can help us in many different ways. However, with age, it is important to know that:

- We become more sensitive to the effects of medications.
- Our bodies do not process medications as efficiently.
- We are more likely to experience medication side effects, drug interactions or other adverse effects.



### BRAIN



The **brain** becomes more sensitive to drug effects. The effects of medications on the brain may also last longer.

### MUSCLE & FAT



Some medications stay longer in our body because we have **less muscle and more body fat**.

### LIVER



The **liver** becomes less efficient at eliminating some medications. This may lead to interactions when taking multiple medications.

### KIDNEYS



The **kidneys** remove medications from the body less efficiently, causing them to build up.

### BODY WATER



Our body contains **less water** and some medications may become more concentrated, increasing their effect.