Answers to these 12 questions could save your life

If your government allows it, your doctor prescribed it, and your pharmacist dispensed it, then it must be safe, right? Not necessarily.

Make an informed choice so you can weigh the benefits of a prescription drug against potential harms. If you are already taking prescription drugs, be on the lookout for possible interactions and be aware of potential symptoms on stopping or changing your dosage.

Before even filling a prescription, ask your doctor:

1. How does this drug work, how much improvement can I expect, and how soon?

2. If I don’t take this drug now, and instead wait for a while, what will happen?

3. What are the most likely side effects?

4. Are there any rare serious side effects?

5. Are there any permanent problems this drug can cause?

6. If this is a new drug, why can’t I take an older drug?

7. Can I try a lower dose?

8. What date will we review my use/dose of this drug?

9. Are there problems stopping the drug or any special considerations on stopping or changing dose that I should watch for?

10. Are there any potential interactions with food, my other medical conditions, or my current medications?

11. Might this drug affect my weight/sleep/hair/skin/nails/mood/sex life/relationships — and if so, how?

12. Do I need to stop this drug before I get pregnant?

www.RxISK.org  David Healy’s website