

Health Watch: Understand Over-the-Counter Drug Labels

OTC medicine labels contain important, easy-to-read usage and safety information.

What's On The Label

- **Active Ingredient.** The main substance in product; amount per unit.
- **Purpose.** Product action or category (such as antihistamine, antacid, or cough suppressant.); reason for use.
- **Uses.** Symptoms or diseases the product will treat or prevent.
- **Warnings.** When not to use the product; conditions that may require advice from a doctor before taking the product; possible interactions or side effects.
- **Directions.** Specific age categories, how to take, how much, how often, and how long.
- **Other Information.** How to store the product properly
- **What to do if an overdose occurs.**
- **Inactive Ingredients.** Substances such as colors or flavors.

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FOR EXAMPLE ONLY:

Drug Facts

<i>Active Ingredient (in each tablet)</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
Name of Medication 2 mg	Antihistamine

Uses temporarily relieves the symptoms due to hay fever or other upper respiratory allergies:

- sneezing
- runny nose
- itchy, watery eyes
- itchy throat

Warnings

Ask a doctor before use if you have

- glaucoma
- a breathing problem such as emphysema or chronic bronchitis
- trouble urinating due to enlarged prostate gland

When using this product

- you may get drowsy
- avoid alcoholic drinks, alcohol, sedatives, and tranquilizers may increase drowsiness
- be careful when driving a motor vehicle or operating machinery
- excitability may occur, especially in children

If **pregnant or breast-feeding**, ask a health professional before use.

Keep out of reach of children. In case of overdose, get medical help or contact a Poison Control Center right away.

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Directions

adults and children 12 years and over take 2 tablets every 4 to 6 hours; not more than 12 tablets in 24 hours

children 6 years to under 12 years take 1 tablet every 4 to 6 hours; not more than 6 tablets in 24 hours

children under 6 years ask a doctor

Other Information store at 20-25°C (68-77°F)

- protect from excessive moisture

Inactive Ingredients D&C yellow no. 10, lactose, magnesium stearate, microcrystalline cellulose, pre-gelatinized starch

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Taken from WebMD Public Information with the FDA.