

# Know **Your** Medications!



---

## ONLINE RESOURCES

The Choice Care website offers additional information about preventative care and other health issues. Dr. Zwelling's blog includes frequent updates on the latest medical news and practical interpretation of healthcare headlines.

**Choice Care Patient Website:** [patients.z-doc.com](http://patients.z-doc.com)

**Marcy's Blog:** [marcy-z.blogspot.com](http://marcy-z.blogspot.com)

Your medications.  
Your health.  
Your life.



### Choice Care

3771 Katella Avenue, Suite 108  
Los Alamitos, CA 90720  
562-596-7584 • email: [info@z-doc.com](mailto:info@z-doc.com)

### Choice Care

*by Marcy Zwelling, MD*

Private Medical Services



*NOTE:  
Marcy,  
I'll come up with something  
for this space.  
-Nancy*

## Why take medications?

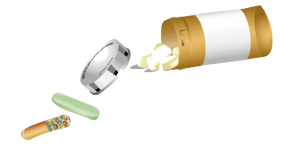
Medications are NOT always necessary. There are many ways to solve a problem. For instance, exercise has been a proven solution to high blood pressure. But if you don't exercise or if you can't exercise, you may need or desire to choose another solution to get your blood pressure under control. But, if you have made a commitment to take a medication, you should make it a point of trying to meet your commitment. If you cannot, because of a side effect or because of the cost of the medication, then we'll find another solution. But, you must let your doctor know that you can't meet your obligation so that he/she (ME) ... can help you get it done.

If you are prescribed medications in THIS office you should know why and if you don't you MUST ask. Never take a medication unless you know what it is for how it is going to help you. It is your medication; your health, and your life... don't be afraid to ask for help.

## How do I take my medications?

Read the instructions on the bottle and/or the instructions that I have given you. If it is not clear, ask. As to when during the day to take your medications: if there are no special instructions, it usually doesn't make that much of a difference but I would recommend that you take the medication at the same time every day. It is easier to remember to take them. And yes, you may take them "all at once". *Just don't choke !!!*

## Ask Questions!



### What if my new prescription doesn't look like my old prescription?

Don't take a pill that you don't know is the right pill. Make sure that you ask the pharmacist to give verify that the same manufacturer makes your generic medications. That allows for consistency. If you take a brand name medication, continue the brand name.

### What is a formulary?

A formulary is a health plan list of the medications that they "cover". This means that they have negotiated a contract with a company and this list of medications is about THEIR best deal. It is about the deal. It is not about the medication. Do not be fooled that this list of medications is a list of "preferred" medications as in "better". They are not. The difficulty with a formulary is that it changes depending on the "deal". (This is one more reminder that health care is a business.)

In the state of California, the California Medical Association was responsible years ago for assuring that the health plans do not change your medications after you have been successfully taking a medication. This law was specifically designed to protect you.

Most recently, the health plans have been making contracts with PBM's (pharmacy benefit managers). These companies are now being set up outside the state in order to avoid the law here in California. I am personally working with the State of California Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) to make sure that in spite of all the efforts of the business community, your health remains the primary issue here and that your medications cannot randomly be changed.

What does this mean? This means that you should not change a medication without my explicit okay. And this means that you should not allow special interests to interfere with your life. Your health care choices must remain yours and should always be made after careful consideration.

