

Taking Medicines

Medical treatment, for the most common or most chronic ailments, tends to be in the form of drugs. Even if you are admitted to hospital, it is likely that you will be treated with drugs rather than with surgery or mechanical devices, such as ventilators.

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Drugs can come in many different forms, depending on where in your body they need to go and how best to get them there. Creams and lotions can be used on your skin, and some drugs, especially those to treat your lungs, can be inhaled. Most common are tablets, pills, and capsules that you swallow. These are digested in your stomach and, from there, are transferred to your blood and carried around your body.

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Sadly, not all drugs survive being inside your stomach – the chemicals will be broken down and they will become useless before the transition to your blood. Such drugs need to be injected directly into your veins or muscles. Type I diabetics, for example, have to inject insulin regularly, and vaccines have to be administered by injection. This can be uncomfortable, as no one likes needles, which is why the method is only for drugs where there is no other option.

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In what different ways can you take medicine?

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Why can't all medicines be swallowed?

What drug do Type I diabetics need?