

Taking medications – a key to good health



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Taking medications as directed

Reduce the risk of hospitalization

For seniors, approximately 1 out of 10 hospital admissions are the result of incorrect use of medications.¹

Avoid deterioration of health

Many seniors take only some of their medications or forget to take them at all.² This can have serious consequences, including increased discomfort, inadequate disease prevention and possibly even death.³

Reduce your risk of falls

The risk of falling increases with the number of prescription and over-the-counter medications taken. Consulting with a physician or a pharmacist about all of your medications and following their directions can reduce the risk of falling.⁴

See the next page for a helpful reference sheet on managing your medications.

1. C. Nananda, J.P. Fanale, P. Kronholm, "The Role of Medication Non-Compliance and Adverse Drug Reactions in Hospitalizations of the Elderly," *Archives of Internal Medicine*, 150 (1990): 841-845.

2. Durso, S.C., M.D., "Technological Advances for Improving Medication Adherence in the Elderly," *Annals of Long-Term Care*, 2001; 9 (4): 43-48.

3. Ibid.

4. K. Cameron, R.Ph., M.P.H., "The Role of Medication Modification in Fall Prevention," *NCOA: Falls Free: Promoting a National Falls Prevention Action Plan*, (2005): 29-39.

Advice to help you better manage medications

1. Take each medication at the same time every day. A routine can help you remember to take medications as prescribed.
2. Take prescribed medications for the full course even if you feel better. Your condition may continue to exist and it could worsen if you stop taking the medication.
3. Keep your medications in original containers labeled clearly.
4. Make a list of all your medicines. Include prescriptions, over-the-counter medicines (such as aspirin), herbs (such as echinacea) and supplements (such as calcium). Share the list with your physician, nurse or pharmacist.
5. Ask your healthcare provider to recommend a simple device or way to help you remember to take your medications correctly.

Taking charge of your medication

Before leaving your doctor's office, write down the answers to these questions when you get a new prescription and save it for future reference.

Prescription information

1. Name of medicine:

- _____
- Brand name Generic name
Is a generic available? Yes No

2. Why do I need this medicine?

3. When should I take this medicine and for how long?

4. How should I take this medicine?

- with meals on an empty stomach?
 with water
 other _____

5. Will this new prescription work safely with the other medicines I am taking, including over-the-counter medicines and herbal remedies?

- Yes No

Taking the medication

6. Is there any food or drink that I should avoid while taking this medicine?

7. Are there any side effects that could occur and what should I do if they occur?

8. What should I do if I miss a dose or if I take too much medicine at one time?

9. What suggestions do you have to help me remember to take my medications?

Ask your pharmacist

Before leaving your pharmacy, be sure to ask these questions*:

1. Is there written information about my medicine that you can give me? (Ask the pharmacist to review the most important information with you. Ask if it is available in large print or, if necessary, in a language other than English.)

2. What is the most important thing I should know about this medicine?

3. Will any test or monitoring be required while I am taking this medicine?

- Yes No

4. Can I get a refill? Yes No
If so, how many?

5. How should I store this medicine?

*The pharmacist may provide a printout with what you need to know.

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