

Using Medications Safely

Area(s) Served:

Nationwide

Phone: N/A

Phone Extension: N/A

Contracted Provider: Not Applicable

Description:

Medications are probably the single most important means that health care professionals have to help prevent illness, disability and death in the geriatric population. When used correctly, prescribed or over-the-counter medications can greatly improve the health and independence of older Americans.

Safety Tips for Using Medications At Home

- Use a medication box or other system to manage your daily medications.
- Ask your pharmacist for suggestions.
- Write out a medication schedule and keep it with your medications.
- Always drink plenty of water after swallowing a tablet or capsule.
- Sit or stand when swallowing medications. This prevents them from getting stuck in your throat.
- Do not crush medications until you check with your pharmacist.
- Never take medications prescribed for someone else.
- Never stop taking a medication without first consulting your physician.
- Keep medications out of the reach of children and memory-impaired persons.
- Store all medications in a cool, dry place. A closet may be preferable to a medicine cabinet.
- Discard outdated medications and those left over from a previous prescription.

At the Doctor's Office and the Pharmacy:

Get clear instructions regarding your medications:

- Name of the medicine.
- Purpose: Why you are taking the medicine.
- Dose: How and when to take the medicine.
- Duration: How long to take the medicine.
- Effects: What results to expect from the medicine and what to do if the expected results do not occur.
- Side Effects: Possible side effects and what to do if side effects or unexpected reactions occur.
- Restrictions: What to avoid while taking the medication.

Other tips:

- Have all your prescriptions filled at one pharmacy, if possible so the pharmacist can check for drug interactions.
- Ask your pharmacist about generic medications, which may be equally effective as brand name, but less expensive.
- Ask your pharmacist about easy-open medication containers.
- Ask your pharmacist whether your medications can be delivered to your home.
- Ask your pharmacist for help selecting non-prescription medications.

