Seniors

Why Am I Needed?

Senior citizens are at risk for accidental poisoning caused by prescription medication.

Changes to body processes as you age can affect the way medicines are absorbed and used. Digestion effects the rate at which medicine enters the bloodstream. Body weight effects the amount of medication prescribed and how long it stays in the system. Circulatory systems effect the speed at which medication reaches the liver and kidneys. Liver and kidney function effects how medication is broken down and removed from the body. Any one of these changes will have an impact on prescription interactions, dosage tolerance, and effectiveness.

Having multiple prescribers, interactions between prescription medication and OTC medications such as aspirin, and doubling amounts of medications because of missed or forgotten doses put seniors at risk.

What Do I Need to Know?

Medications can help to support health, but can also have unintended consequences when not taken as prescribed, combined with other medications, or taken with alcohol or other illicit drugs.

Particular health conditions can affect memory, such as dementia and Alzheimer’s. Memory issues can create a barrier to taking medications as directed.

Health conditions like high blood pressure and asthma may cause a harmful reaction to decongestants.

Some foods should be avoided when taking certain medications as they interfere with absorption.

Alcohol should be avoided with some medications as it slows reaction time.

Alcohol may cause different unwanted effects because of the changes in body processes.

Expired medications can cause problems if accidentally or unintentionally taken due to improper storage or disposal. Family members or friends may target seniors in an attempt to divert prescription medications for improper use.

“Approximately 70% of those who abuse prescription medications get them from family and friends.”
What Needs To Be Done?

☑ Understand as much as possible about your prescribed medications to avoid potential problems by talking with all prescribers about all your medications, including over-the-counter medications. Do not forget to mention vitamin, herbal, or mineral supplements, dietary restrictions, topical ointments, and daily caffeine, water, and sugar intake.

☑ Ask the pharmacist or prescriber to write medications out, so a comprehensive list of everything being taken is available for family, friends, or medical responders to have as a reference.

☑ Use daily pillboxes to help track medications.

☑ Ask for help when packing pillboxes.

☑ Safely dispose of medications once they are no longer needed or when they expire.

☑ Consider designating a responsible person for accompaniment to the doctor’s office or pharmacist to read label warnings and help identify any harmful medication interactions.

☑ To prevent the diversion of prescription medication, use lock boxes or find a lockable storage area for prescriptions.

☑ Take Correctly, Store Securely, Dispose Properly, Never Share.™

The prescribing of medications is the most common type of medical treatment in the United States, and pharmacists dispense approximately 4 billion prescriptions each year.*

For more information visit projectlazarus.org or call +1.336.667.8100


Resources

Safe Medication:


Medication Disposal Information:
https://apps.ncdoi.net/