

## Do you have a new prescription from your doctor?

If your doctor gives you a new prescription, please consider asking these questions:

1. What is the name of the medication?
2. What is it used for?
3. How long will I need to take it?
4. What are the side effects, if any?
5. What is the cost of this medication?
6. Is there a generic equivalent?

***By being an active participant in the medication process, you can reduce your risk of experiencing a side-effect from a medication.***

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for



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## Medication Safety Tips for Seniors

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# Medication Safety Tips for Seniors



Older people experience adverse events from medications three times the rate of younger people!

While older people make up 13% of the population, they account for over 50% of the deaths and 40% of the hospitalizations due to adverse events.

It is important for older people to become active participants in the decisions that are made regarding their medications. By being an active part of the process, older people can reduce their risk of adverse reactions to medications.

1. If asked about current medications, include prescription medications as well as any over-the-counter, herbal or alternative remedies you may be taking. These over-the-counter, herbal or alternative remedies, too, are medications with active drugs in them. As a senior, they can be quite potent and therefore increase your risk of a side effect.
2. Remember that the increased risk of adverse reactions to medications can be the result of too many medications, drug-drug interactions, and increased sensitivity with aging.
3. The older you become increases your sensitivity to medications, thus increasing your risk for adverse events. A 75-year old is more sensitive than a 65-year old, and an 85-year old is more sensitive than a 75-year old, and so on.
4. Be careful with medications that treat pain, anxiety, insomnia or depression. They can increase your risk of falls and accidents, as well as cause changes in how you think and process.
5. If you are on multiple medications from several different physicians and use more than one pharmacy, occasionally request that your medications be screened for potential drug-drug interactions.
6. If you think you have experienced a side-effect from your medications, contact your doctor or pharmacist immediately. You don't have to tolerate side-effects. There are many medications within each class of drugs that have minimal risk of side-effects in older people.
7. If you or someone you know is experiencing a decline in the quality of their day-to-day lives, there is a strong possibility that (if there is no readily identifiable cause) it may be due to medications you or they are taking.
8. Use a single pharmacy. Get to know your pharmacist so they can provide for you the service they have been trained to provide. Have your pharmacist counsel you on all prescriptions. Don't be afraid to ask questions.
9. Take a list of all your medications (prescription, over-the-counter, herbal) to each and every doctor visit. This will give your doctor a thorough understanding of all medications you are taking.
10. Keep all medications in one place. Perform a yearly medication inventory with your doctor and dispose of outdated or unused medications.