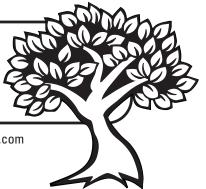
Senior Series

A partnership between Ohio State University Extension and Ohio Aging Network professionals

For more information, visit the Ohio Department of Aging web site at: http://www.goldenbuckeye.com and Ohio State University Extension's "Aging in Ohio" web site at: http://seniorseries.osu.edu



Medication Misuse Among Older Adults

Although aging affects how medications are used by our bodies, a major factor affecting how well a medication works is whether or not we take the medication as we are told to.

If we don't use medications as we are told to, they may hurt or even kill us. Many older adults do not take their medications correctly. There are a number of reasons why misuse occurs:

- Not understanding how to take the medications
- Not hearing how to take the medications
- Not getting the medication
- The medication tasting bad or bitter
- Having a confusing dosage schedule
- Missing some of the medications or skipping doses

- Afraid to take the medications
- Not being able to afford medications (medications costing too much money)
- Not being able to get to the medication store
- Not being able to read the labels or see the medications
- Not being able to open "childproof" medication bottles

On the next page are some ways to avoid medication misuse. If you have questions about a medication, experience problems, or simply do not want to take a medication, consult your doctor or pharmacist right away.

Reference

Senior Series Volume 2, The Center on Rural Elderly, University of Missouri System.





| Problem | Possible Solutions |
|-------------------------|---|
| Hard time seeing | Ask pharmacist to use large print on label. |
| | Use a magnifying glass to check labels before taking medication. |
| Hard time hearing | Let others know if you did not hear the instructions. |
| | Ask doctor/pharmacist to write instructions. |
| | Ask someone to go with you to the doctor. |
| Complex dosage schedule | Write down your schedule clearly and use colors to differentiate times of day. Use daily/weekly pill boxes. Coordinate the time to take medications with specific activities (i.e., meal time, time of favorite television program, when mail arrives, etc.). |
| Forgetfulness | Use memory aids and daily or weekly pill boxes. Place notes to yourself in places you will see them. |
| Hard time moving | Use a pharmacy that will deliver prescriptions (cost may be higher). |
| Limited use of hands | Ask pharmacist for easy-to-open medication caps. |
| Many medications | Have doctor check your medicines. |
| | Ask your pharmacist to check all your medicines. |
| Many doctors | Make sure each doctor and your pharmacist know all medications you are taking. |
| | Purchase prescriptions at only one pharmacy. |
| Cost of medications | Take advantage of discount programs. |
| | Call local pharmacies and compare prices. |
| | Ask doctor or pharmacist whether a generic medication will be as effective and less costly. |
| | Ask doctor to prescribe generic medications if possible. Ask doctor or pharmacist if you qualify for a patient assistance program through a medication company. |
| | Ask your pharmacist to review your medicines to see if there is a way to lower your costs. |

Revised by Dr. Bella Mehta, PharmD (August 2007).

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