

Managing Multiple Medications

For Older Adults: A Caregiver's Guide

Reality of taking Multiple Medications¹

Adults over 65 are more likely to use a combination of prescription medications and over the counter medications to treat multiple conditions. They are also more likely to experience harmful side effects from medication due to changes that occur with aging. This increase in medication can lead to harmful side effects and interactions between drugs.

- Fixed incomes cause trouble paying for medication, making it difficult to take it.
- 12% of individuals over 65 take 10 or more medications per week.
- 35% of older adults have one or more harmful reactions to medication every year.^{1,2}



<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/diabetesmedicines.html>

Risk Factors for Medication Problems³

- Age of 85+
- Renal Insufficiency
- Low body weight
- 6 or more chronic disease
- Taking more than 12 dosages of medication everyday
- Previous history of adverse drug reactions

Medication- Related Problems^{4,5}

- Confusion
- Falls and Fractures
- Changes in speech and memory
- Insomnia
- Delirium

If you experience any of these please contact your physician.

Questions to Ask Your Doctor^{4,5}

- What am I taking this medication for?
- How will I feel while taking this medication?
- How will this medication affect the other medications I take?
- Will this medication change how any of my herbal or dietary supplements work?
- What possible problems could this medication cause?
- Do you have written information about the medicine that I can keep?



<http://www.ahrq.gov/patients-consumers/care-planning/index.html>



<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/drugsafety.htm>

Easy Steps to Manage Your Medications Safely²

1. Be informed about the medication you are taking
2. Use one pharmacy and talk to your pharmacist often
3. Understand and pay attention to possible side effects
4. Store your medications safely
5. Take medications as prescribed
6. Find help paying for medication

References:

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4. Caregivers guide to medicine and aging. Family Caregiver Alliance. 2014. <https://caregiver.org/caregivers-guide-medications-and-aging>
5. Medication Errors. Medline Plus. 2014. <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/patientinstructions/000535.htm>

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