



DRUG SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

(The columns of Joy Loverde and www.careguide.com)

ASK THE PHARMACIST:

- Any questions regarding drugs
- If generic drugs are available
- For written information about the medicine
- For easy-open containers as long as there are no children present
- To keep a file on elder's drug usage and medical history
- About senior citizen discounts
- For large print labels
- About 24-hour telephone and emergency services
- About prescription home-delivery services
- About year-end tax and insurance statements

DISCUSS AND IMPLEMENT THE FOLLOWING:

- If forgetfulness is a problem for your elder, create a chart. List the days of the week, name of each medication, times to take each drug, then cross out the drug each time it is taken.
- If your relative insists on using a plastic pillbox, keep the original prescription container handy. Keep a sample of each drug in its original container. When traveling, pack the original drug container as well.
- Make sure the prescription labels are clear and in large print. Keep a magnifying glass near prescription containers. If your elder wears glasses, remind him/her to wear them when reading labels.
- Use pharmacist provided colored containers for different drugs.
- When filling prescriptions, check the name of the drug on the label before leaving the pharmacy.
- Don't mix alcohol and drugs.
- Consult the doctor before taking over-the-counter drugs.
- Ask party hosts if the food or beverages they are serving contain alcohol.
- Store drugs as directed. Refrigerate the drug only if told to do so.
- Know the expected side effects of the drugs.
- Never share drugs. Never
- Read labels in properly lighted rooms.
- Ask the doctor or pharmacist if the drug is habit forming.
- Discard medicines that have expired or have no labels.
- Ask the doctor to order a home visit from a nurse to teach the elder how to manage medications.
- Discuss the fact that making rapid movements like standing up too quickly can cause unnecessary falls.
- Ask your family member to keep a list of all drugs in sue, prescription and over the counter, in his/her wallet or purse at all times.
- Keep a list of drugs in use on the refrigerator or by the telephone
- Do business with one reliable pharmacy.
- Keep each doctor informed of all prescriptions.
- Share written medication information with every family member.
- Check with the doctor before asking the pharmacist to substitute the prescription.
- Check with the doctor before asking the pharmacist to substitute the prescription with generic drugs.
- Make use of identification bracelets for allergies and chronic conditions.
- Before purchasing over-the-counter drugs, examine the packages for signs of tampering. If the seal is broken or it looks like the box has been opened, get another package and give the other to the store manager.
- Keep pills distanced from the bed. This reduces the possibility of taking the wrong drug or wrong combination when sleepy. Do not take drugs in the dark.