



Health Awareness

The “Do’s” And “Don’ts” Of Your Daily Drugs: Tips For Safe Prescription Use

(NAPSA)—Walking out of the doctor’s office with prescriptions in hand is just the beginning. Did you remember to speak to your physician about when and how to take your medications? And does your doctor actually know all the medications you’re taking?

According to The Journal of the American Medical Association, each year, more than 2.3 million Americans experience adverse reactions to prescription drugs, sometimes ending up in the emergency room or in the hospital. Since seniors take more medications than younger people, they are most likely to experience one of these episodes.

Seniors, their adult children and their caregivers need to understand how to prevent these potentially dangerous interactions and to be sure medications are taken safely.

The pharmacists at Prescription Solutions, a pharmacy benefit management firm that manages prescription drugs for millions of members, including seniors, offers the following advice:

First, find out if your insurance plan offers prescriptions by mail (mail service). Medications can be ordered by telephone, computer or fax so you have them at home when you need them. Mail service is convenient for seniors and people with limited mobility as well as those of us who are busy and forgetful or who fail to plan ahead. In addition, you can often pur-



chase a 90-day supply of medications taken routinely (rather than the traditional 30-day supply offered at retail pharmacies) for two co-pays rather than three, which can save you up to \$400 a year—as well as time spent traveling to a retail pharmacy location to fill the prescription. On average, mail service drugs cost 10 percent less than prescriptions filled at retail pharmacies, according to a new survey by the Pharmaceutical Care Management Association.

Mail service can also be a valuable “safety net.” Prescription Solutions’ mail service pharmacists offer additional safety checks, reviewing your claims history to identify drugs that might cause adverse reactions or dangerous side effects. They can also provide advice on how to use medications, what to take or not take with them, and what to do if you miss a dose. The pharmacists are just a phone call away.

In addition, the professionals at Prescription Solutions recommend that you bring current medications with you when visiting your physician(s) to ensure that they are still needed.

Then, once you know that your prescriptions are appropriate, it’s important to handle them correctly. Store medications in a safe, dry place rather than a damp bathroom medicine cabinet.

Keep all medicines and vitamins in their correct bottles to avoid mix-ups. Check to make sure medications have not expired and dispose of any that are outdated.

You can also inquire about the possibility of substituting generic drugs for brand-name drugs. A generic drug that is deemed therapeutically equivalent to and equally as effective as a brand-name drug may be considerably more affordable.

Finally, NEVER order prescription medications from unknown Web sites. Look to see if you are ordering from a pharmacy that has earned the Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Sites (VIPPS) accreditation by the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy. Web sites that are not accredited may not be regulated or staffed by licensed pharmacists, and there is less assurance that the medications will be safe or appropriate.

For more information about Prescription Solutions, visit www.rxsolutions.com.