

Medication Safety: Where To Go For Answers To Drug Safety Questions

(NAPSA)—In the wake of a recall and concerns about prescription drug safety, many consumers are turning away from the latest prescription drugs and going back to older medications with a longer safety record, according to a new national survey.

Seven of every 10 people would rather use a medication that has been on the market for more than 10 years instead of a newer medication if the price was the same, according to the Medco Monitor, a national survey commissioned by pharmacy benefit manager Medco Health Solutions, Inc.

“Prescription drug safety is a huge concern for consumers now and it seems that consumers are willing to forgo the latest in development for the peace of mind that comes with older medications,” said Dr. Glen Stettin. “An interesting side benefit is that many of the older drugs have generic versions available, so while consumers search for safety, they are also saving money on their medications.”

Recently, one pharmaceutical company voluntarily recalled a widely used pain medication over concerns of increased risk of heart attack. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) held hearings on the safety of COX-II inhibitors and other pain relievers and requested drug label changes to reflect cardiovascular and gastrointestinal risks. The attention generated by the FDA’s action seemed to have an effect on consumers. More than 80 percent of baby boomers (ages 40 to 58) who took part in The Medco Monitor were familiar with the drug safety issues regarding COX-II inhibitors.

Where To Turn For Answers

The overwhelming attention generated by the drug warnings, as well as the issues surrounding antidepressants and erectile dysfunction medications, may leave many consumers wonder-



Survey shows 7 out of 10 people trust older drugs over newer ones.

ing where they can turn for answers to any questions they have about the safety of prescription medications.

Don’t forget your pharmacist: Dr. Stettin says that many overlook one of the best sources of information—the pharmacist. However, not only is the pharmacist just as qualified to discuss the safety of prescription medications, they may be more easily accessible than their physician.

Nurses can be helpful: The nurses in your physician’s office, as well as Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants, can also be valuable resources for you to look to for information on drug safety and to answer any questions about your medications.

Check with your health plan: Many health plans and pharmacy benefit managers will have information about medication safety available on their Web sites.

Go right to the source: The FDA has a wealth of information on its Web site, www.fda.gov, including news on drug recalls and safety issues. The agency also publishes a monthly magazine, FDA Consumer Magazine, that covers current issues related to prescription medications.

For more information, visit www.medco.com.