



# Health Awareness

## Benefit From Prescription Medicine Ads

(NAPSA)—You play an important role in taking care of yourself. One way to stay healthy is to be open to information about medical conditions and treatment options. Believe it or not, prescription medicine ads can inform you and people you care for about health problems.

Ads can alert you to health conditions and treatment choices. This can help you talk to your doctor. In fact, these ads have helped nearly 65 million people talk to their doctors about a medical problem.

**Follow these 3 steps to make ads work for you:**

### 1) Pay Attention to Ads.

Read about the health problems mentioned in the ad. Do you or someone you know have the symptoms listed? If so, you may want to learn more.

As you know, all medicines come with risks and benefits—so look at these as well.

### 2) Learn About the Medicine or Medical Condition.

Take time to learn about the condition and the medicine in the ad. Go to Web sites and call the toll-free numbers listed to learn more. You may also want to talk to your friends and family.

“The other day I ran across an ad about a medicine. Then I learned more about it by talking with my friends and the people I work with,” said Ezma of Massachusetts. Like Ezma, try talking to others about the ads you see.

### 3) Have a Talk With Your Doctor.

And always make time to talk to your doctor. Asking questions about the prescription medicine ad can help you start that discussion. You may even want to bring the ad in to the doctor's



**Learning more about symptoms through a prescription medicine ad could be good for your health.**

office with you.

### Key Questions to Ask Your Doctor Include:

1. Could I have the condition discussed in the ad?
2. What do I need to do?
3. Why is it important for me to do this?

A recent study by the Food and Drug Administration found that most doctors have better talks with their patients when people came to discuss information in an ad.

“I like it when patients come to me after seeing an ad. They bring information about a health problem or medicine that they want to talk about,” said Dr. Karen Malamut of Illinois. “It starts a conversation. That helps me understand my patients' symptoms.”

Of course, ads do not take the place of a doctor. Doctors may suggest a different medicine. They may want you to change your lifestyle. Or, doctors may ask you to take other tests to check for health problems.

These steps may help you get the information you need to take better care of yourself and get the most from a doctor's visit. This can help you live a healthier life.