

Health NEWS & NOTES

Prescription Medicine Ads Encourage Talks

(NAPSA)—Millions of people never visit a doctor. But that does not mean they are healthy. There are many reasons why people put off seeing their doctors. Many people just don't know what to say. Others are not aware that what they are feeling could be a sign of a serious health problem.

Health information helps people to talk to their doctors.

Have you ever seen an ad for a prescription medicine? Did it make you want to talk to your doctor? A *Prevention* study last year found that nearly 65 million people said "yes." Of those people, 29 million talked about a health problem for the first time.

Prescription medicine ads help start talks about serious health issues. Many studies have found that these ads empower patients. They motivate people to play a bigger part in their health care. Barbara of Maryland agrees.

"I've had bad allergies for years," said Barbara. "I saw an ad for a prescription medicine. I looked on the Internet to learn more about it. Then I went to my doctor. We had a more informed talk."

Doctors see the benefits, too. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration, FDA, found that 58% of doctors think that prescription medicine ads help their patients get more involved. Ads help patients take better control of their health. Doctors also find that these ads help their patients ask better questions.

Dr. Sharon Allison-Ottey, of Lanham, Maryland said: "As long



as they're fair and balanced, prescription medicine ads are a useful tool. They are in the doctor's black bag to address health awareness. The ads also help to increase communication between the doctor and the patient." She adds, "There is no magic bullet in medicine. Any information, including prescription medicine ads, is beneficial to the overall health of the patient."

Work with your doctor as a team. "My doctor and I work together," said Chuck of Florida. "One day, I saw an ad for a prescription medicine. It made me decide to talk to my doctor about my symptoms. Then, he gave me a treatment that worked."

Prescription medicine ads are making a difference. These ads help strengthen the tie between doctors and patients. They get people to think about their health. Prescription medicine ads encourage people to have in-depth discussions. Remember, the more you know about your health, the better off you are.