

Be An Active Member Of Your Health Care Team

(NAPSA)—To make the best choices and to use medicines more effectively and safely, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, (FDA), is encouraging consumers to become more involved in their health care.

When it comes to using medicines, there is no such thing as completely safe. All medicines have risks. FDA approval of a drug simply means that the benefits outweigh the known risks.

Physicians, physician assistants, nurses, pharmacists and you make up your health care team. To reduce the risks related to using medicines and to get the maximum benefit, you need to play an active role on the team.

Consumers can become more active in the following ways:

- **Speak Up!** The more information your health care team members know about you, the better. Discuss the following with your health care providers:

- Your medical history
- Allergies and sensitivities
- Prescription medicines and over the counter medicines you take routinely and occasionally
- Dietary supplements, including vitamins and herbals

- **Ask Questions!** Your health care team can help you make the best-informed choices but you have to ask the right questions. FDA and others have a list of questions to help guide you. Have your questions written down and take notes on the answers.

- **Learn The Facts!** Learn



It's time more Americans get involved in their own health care, advise experts at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

and understand as much as you can about your medicine. Ask for written material from your providers and look at information from other reputable sources.

- **Follow Directions!** When you are ready to use the medicine, get the best results and reduce the side effects by following the instructions given to you by your prescriber and printed on the label.

- **Report Back To The Team!** Pay attention to how you feel, and notify your health care team of any problems.

The FDA has more information on how to be an active member of your health care team. Go to www.fda.gov/cder or call 1 (888) INFO-FDA.