

Give Your Medicine Cabinet A Checkup

(NAPSA)—You aren't the only one who needs periodic checkups—so does your medicine cabinet. It's good to clean it out at least once a year, pitch out what you don't need and restock supplies that are low or missing.

Out with the Old

If your medicine cabinet includes tubes and bottles that are outdated, the first step is to discard them. Rite Aid Pharmacist Sarah Matunis, R.Ph., points out that all prescription drugs have expiration dates on their labels. Over-the-counter medications have this information stamped on the package. Throw away any medicines that have expired, changed color, formed residue in the bottle, or were not stored according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

The only prescriptions you should have in your medicine cabinet are those you are currently taking. "Resist the temptation to share leftover prescriptions with anyone, no matter how similar their symptoms. Prescriptions should only be used by the person for whom they were prescribed. People who self-medicate can build resistance and mask symptoms. Furthermore, any old medications given to others can cause serious allergic reactions or drug interactions," added Matunis.

If you can't remember what a prescription was for, a "brown bag" session may be in order. Collect the items, put them in a brown bag and take them to a Rite Aid pharmacist who is specially trained to review the medications and answer any questions.

In with the New

According to Matunis, a well-stocked medicine cabinet should have certain staples, like pain relievers, antiseptics, antibiotic ointments, bandages, analgesics



and medications for diarrhea, nausea, and constipation. In case of an accidental poisoning, every home should also have a supply of ipecac syrup available.

Keeping Medications Safe

Your bathroom and kitchen are the worst places in the house to store medications. The heat and humidity in these rooms can quickly degrade medications. All medications should be kept in a cool, dark place, away from sunlight, heat sources and children.

Checkup Reminder

It's important to establish a routine home assessment of your medical supplies to ensure everything is available and hasn't expired. "Develop some sort of reminder so it becomes a routine annual event," suggests Matunis. "Try writing down the date on a piece of tape and sticking it on an inside shelf. A year later, repeat the 'house cleaning' of your medicine cabinet." Don't delay, clean your medicine cabinet today!

For more advice on cleaning your medicine cabinet or to find the location of the nearest Rite Aid pharmacist, visit www.riteaid.com.