

Suggestions to Reduce Medication Related Falls and Fall Injuries



When asked about medications, remember to include not only your prescription medications but also your over-the-counter medications as well as any herbal or alternative remedies you may be taking. These too are medications with active drugs in them and because of advanced age these can be quite potent and as such can increase your risk of a side-effect.

1. The increased risk of adverse reactions to medications by older people is a result of many things including; too many medications, drug-drug interactions, increased sensitivity to medications with age and diseases often associated with aging further increase sensitivity to medications.
2. The older that you become the more sensitive you become to medications and thus you experience an increased risk of an adverse event from medications. In other words a 75 year old is more sensitive than a 65 year old and an 85 year old is more sensitive than a 75 year old and so on.
3. Be especially careful with medications that are used to treat pain, anxiety, insomnia or depression as older people are especially sensitive to these types of medications. They can increase your risk of falls and accidents as well as causing changes in how clearly you think and process.
4. If you are on multiple medications from several different physicians and use more than one pharmacy be sure you occasionally request that your medications be screened for potential drug-drug interactions.
5. If you should experience what you think is a side-effect from your medications be sure to contact your doctor or pharmacist immediately. You do not have to tolerate side-effects. Today there exist many medications within each class of drugs that have minimal risk of side-effects in older people.
6. If you or someone you know is experiencing a decline in the quality of their day to day lives there is strong possibility that if there is no readily identifiable cause it may be due to the medications you or they are taking.
7. Whenever you receive a new prescription from your doctor please ask the following questions:
 - What is the name of the medication?
 - What is it used for?
 - How should I take it?

- How long will I need to take it?
- What are the side-effects, if any, that I should look out for?
- How much does this medication cost?
- Is there a generic equivalent available for this medication.
- How much does this medication cost?

8. Use a single pharmacy. Get to know your pharmacist so that they can provide for you the service they have been trained to provide.

9. Take all of your medications (prescription, over-the-counter, and herbal) to each and every doctor visit. This will give your doctor a more thorough understanding of all the medication you are taking.

10. Keep all of your medications in one place. Perform a yearly inventory of your medications, and dispose of outdated or unused medications.

When you go to the pharmacy to get your prescription filled, each and every time have the pharmacist go over each prescription with you. When your prescription has been filled (new or refill) request to speak to the pharmacist, move to the pharmacy consultation window and have the pharmacist take each and every medication out of the bag and have them go over with you the contents of each container and review each label and any precautionary labels. If any of the above seven questions you asked your doctor have not been answered satisfactorily or you have forgotten please ask the pharmacist. If the medication is a refill be sure you recognize the pill before leaving the pharmacy to make sure it is the same one. Sometimes insurance companies require the pharmacy to dispense that medication but from a different manufacturer and therefore it may look different.

ResponseLink offers information for general educational and informational purposes only. This information is not intended as a substitute for advice, treatment, or recommendation from health care professionals. The information is not exhaustive and does not cover all fall related ailments, physical conditions, or their treatment. It is important to follow the advice of your doctor and other health care professionals regarding your individual health care needs.

Copyright 2008, The F.I.P.'s Program and all related material is the Property of ResponseLink, As such it is not to be reproduced without permission. For information contact 1-801-955-4949