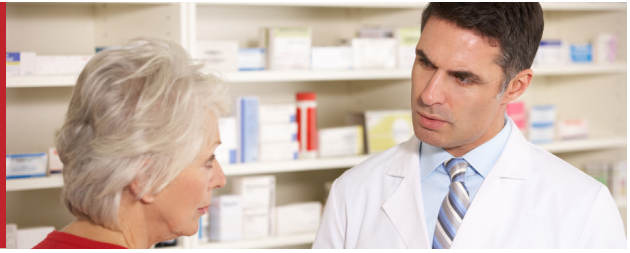


# Medication Safety for Older Adults



## Be your own advocate

Medication safety becomes increasingly important as we age. Older adults are more likely to take multiple medications, including over-the-counter medications, prescribed by multiple health care providers. You are the most important part of your healthcare team. Take the time to become familiar with the medications you take. Ask questions and be sure you understand what each medication does and how it can affect you.

- If you see more than one health care provider who is prescribing medication for you, tell each one about all the medicines and supplements you take – don't assume they know.
- Be alert to new symptoms or health issues and contact your health care professional or pharmacist if you feel they could be due to a new medication or a change in dose or frequency.
- If you have trouble hearing or understanding your health care provider, bring a trusted friend or family member with you to appointments to take notes, or ask the provider if it would be okay for you to record your conversation with a tape recorder or cell phone.
- If possible, fill all your prescriptions at a single pharmacy; doing so allows the pharmacist to better identify potential interactions.
- Go over your full list of medications with your doctor at each visit, but at least once a year. Confirm that all the medications you are taking are still necessary and determine which (if any) you can stop taking.
- If you've been taking a medication (prescription or non-prescription) for a long time, ask your health care professional if it is still appropriate for you. The way your body processes medications changes with age.