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Healthy Sunday Topic: Tips to Increase your Medication IQ

Be in the “KNOW” about your medications. Here are a few items that you will need to “KNOW” to keep you informed about your medications. ASK your doctor or pharmacist if you do not KNOW what to do in each case.



- **Do you KNOW what to do if you miss a dose?** Some medications should be taken as soon as you realize you have missed a dose, while others should be skipped until the next dose.
- **Do you KNOW whether you should take your medications with food or on an empty stomach?** Medications may require they be taken with food in order to prevent stomach upset. Others require they be taken on an empty stomach so that the entire dose can be absorbed.
- **Do you KNOW what time of day you should take a medication?** There are some once a day medications that are best taken in the evening while others should be taken in the morning. The time of day that you take a medication could be important in order to avoid certain side effects.
- **Do you KNOW the possible side effects of your medication and know what to do if you experience a side effect?** Some side effects are more serious than others. If you experience a side effect, it may be the kind which goes away over time. Other side effects may be more serious and require you to discontinue the medication. If you discontinue, contact your physician.
- **Do you KNOW if the medications you are on interact with other medications** or if there are certain kinds of foods you should avoid? Some medications may not have their full benefit or may be dangerous when taking them with certain foods or medicines.

Tips to help “YOU” remember when to take your medicine

- **Use an Organizer Pill Box:** If you take several medications, you can keep track of all your medications by using a pill box where you can organize your medications on a weekly or monthly basis.
- **Keep a Medication Record:** If you take more than 2 or 3 medications on a routine basis, a medication record is important to maintain. You may ask your pharmacy to print a record of all your medications and their dosing schedules. You may also make a medication record for yourself. Go to www.safemedication.com for a form. Include your over-the-counter (OTC) medications and herbals since they may also result in drug interactions with prescribed medications. Show to your physician this list at each appointment.



Dr. Brenda Jamerson, PharmD and Associate Professor Campbell University states, **“Take charge of your health and be informed about all of your medications.”**

Nearly three in four Americans do not follow doctor’s orders for taking prescription drugs, a problem that is associated with 125,000 patient deaths each year. One in three patients never even fills the prescription. Others forget to pick up their drugs from the pharmacy, skip doses, take their pills at the wrong time or take too much or too little. And even for those who follow recommendations at the start, some eventually stop taking the medication altogether.

Set reminders and cues to ensure you do not forget to take your medications.

FOR EXAMPLE: Clock times: 7am, 7pm

Meal times: breakfast, lunch, or dinner

Daily rituals: bathroom activities, walking the dog, evening news, checking mail, etc

Remember Your ABCs

Ask your Pharmacist or Physician for help to understand proper use

Be informed about the medication side effects

Comply with the instructions on when and how long to take the medication

June 10- 14 is Men’s Health Week. Men, do not fear taking medications you may need due to side effects such as erectile dysfunction. Please tell your doctor or pharmacist if you experience a side effect that is concerning. It is highly likely that your doctor may be able to switch you to another medication to treat your condition that does not have the troubling side effect.

For more information on medication compliance, refer to the following websites & phone number:

www.adultmedication.com

www.mypillbox.org

www.safemedication.com

www.seniorpharmassist.org

Senior PharmAssist at 919-688-4772 (If “YOU” have a low income and are 60+, call SeniorPharmAssist or ask your pharmacist about any special programs to help you financially.)

Health Tip is a message from your Community Health Coalition, Inc. and is written in partnership with Durham Academy of Medicine, Dentistry and Pharmacy, Old North State Medical Society, North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company, Central Carolina Black Nurses’ Council Inc., The Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Durham and Vicinity, and Durham Regional Hospital.

REMEMBER Healthy People 2020: A Clear Vision to Healthy Living!