

# Tips for Preventing Problems When Taking Multiple Medications

As an older adult patient or the caregiver of an older adult, you are the best source for preventing problems with taking multiple medications. It is in your best interest to understand the types of medications you or your loved one is taking and to inform your pharmacist or health care provider of any suspected side effects of drug interactions.

## Always

- Always ask your health care provider why each medication is prescribed and what it is intended to do.
- Always make sure you understand when and how to take each medication (with food or on an empty stomach, before bedtime, not with dairy products, etc.).
- Always take your medications exactly as directed by your health care provider; ask what to do if you miss a dose.
- Always take a list of all of your medications, including vitamins and over-the-counter medications, and their dosages and review all medications with your health care provider at each visit.
- Always use the same pharmacy for all of your prescription medications. Most pharmacies today have computer systems that will alert the pharmacist to any possible drug interactions.
- Always read labels on medications carefully - your pharmacist may be able to make labels with **large print** if you have trouble reading smaller print.
- If you drink alcohol, always ask your health care provider about the safety of drinking alcohol while taking medication(s).
- Always contact your health care provider immediately if you experience any problems or side effects with your medication.

## Never

- Never take any medication that has expired (check labels carefully).
- Never put different medications in the same container (they can interact with each other even before you take them).
- Never change the way (time/dosage) you take a medication without talking to your health care provider.
- Never share your medication with someone or take medication given to you by someone other than your health care provider.
- Never stop taking a medication without talking to your health care provider first. If you are having problems with a certain medication, there may be another choice. Also, some medications must be stopped gradually to avoid problems.