

## For More Information

### ...about your medicines

U.S. Food & Drug Administration  
[www.fda.gov/cder/index.html](http://www.fda.gov/cder/index.html)

### ...about Ohio programs/ services

Alcohol, Drug Addiction &  
Mental Health Boards  
[www.oacbha.org/Directory/Index2.htm](http://www.oacbha.org/Directory/Index2.htm)

Connect Me Ohio  
[www.connectmeohio.org](http://www.connectmeohio.org)

National Council on Aging  
[www.benefitscheckup.org](http://www.benefitscheckup.org)

Ohio Department of Aging  
[www.goldenbuckeye.com](http://www.goldenbuckeye.com)

Ohio Department of Alcohol &  
Drug Addiction Services  
[www.ada.state.oh.us](http://www.ada.state.oh.us)

Ohio Department of Mental Health  
[www.mh.state.oh.us](http://www.mh.state.oh.us)

### ...about the Older Ohioans Behavioral Health Network

Ohio Association of County  
Behavioral Health Authorities  
[www.oacbha.org/olderohioans.htm/](http://www.oacbha.org/olderohioans.htm/)

Funded by:

**AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals LP**  
and  
**Ohio Department of Aging**

## Medication Do's & Don'ts

Most drug misuse by older adults is unintentional. Here are some ways to help prevent medication problems and get the best benefit from the medications prescribed:



**DO** communicate openly with your doctors and pharmacists to ensure that you are getting the care you deserve.

**DO** ask your doctor about any new prescriptions and make sure you understand all the instructions BEFORE taking them. Read labels carefully. Find out about possible side effects and report any that occur to your doctor immediately.

**DO** establish a routine to avoid forgetting taking medication and a method for organizing your medications, such as a daily or weekly pillbox.

**DO** keep an updated list of all the medications you take – prescription, over-the-counter, herbal remedies, vitamins, dietary supplements, etc.

**DO** share the list with each doctor and pharmacist at every visit; tell them about ALL of the different medicines you are taking, as well as those you are sensitive or allergic to.

**DO** request a review of the list of your prescriptions at your local pharmacy to avoid the potential for negative side effects.

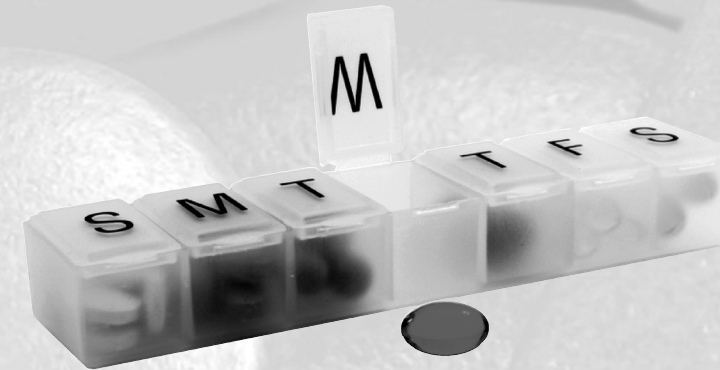


**DON'T** take more or less than the prescribed amount.

**DON'T** stop taking a medication suddenly without first checking with your doctor.

**DON'T** take medications prescribed for someone else or give yours to others.

**DON'T** keep old or expired medications in your medicine cabinet.



## HEALTHY AGING

### Preventing Medication Misuse



Ohio Association of  
COUNTY  
BEHAVIORAL  
HEALTH  
AUTHORITIES

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Cheri L. Walter, CEO

## Did You Know?

- Older adults constitute nearly 13% of the population and buy 33% of all prescription drugs and 40% of all over-the-counter medicines (cold remedies, antacids, aspirin, etc.).
- 83% of older adults take one or more medications daily, and 30% take 8 or more daily.
- At least 40% of older adults do not follow prescription directions.
- 50% of all adverse medication reactions occur among older adults.
- Older patients average 2-3 serious medication errors per month.
- 28% of all older adult hospitalizations result from medication problems.



## Aging and Medications

Medication misuse in older adults frequently results from underuse, overuse, or erratic use. The risks of misuse and potential for abuse increase with age for several reasons:

**AGE-RELATED CHANGES** - Changes in metabolism can have a tremendous impact on the way drugs affect an older person's body.

**HEALTH CONDITIONS/TYPES OF MEDICATIONS** - Older adults are more apt to have multiple chronic illnesses, see multiple doctors and take multiple medications, leading to greater chance for confusion or problems.

**COMPLEX DOSAGE SCHEDULES** - The average older adult takes 4-5 prescriptions and 2 over-the-counter medications, some of them perhaps several times a day.

**SENSORY PROBLEMS** - Poor eyesight makes prescription labels hard to read. Childproof caps make opening pill bottles so frustrating that older adults may skip dosages.

**FORGETFULNESS** - Memory lapses may lead to skipping a dose, to doubling up after missing a dose, or to taking all pills at once to alleviate having to worry about remembering.

**SHARING/SAVING MEDICATIONS** - Sharing pills with someone that may have a similar symptom or saving them for a potential future recurrence are common among older adults.

## Signs to Watch For

Individuals who start acting "senile" may actually be experiencing a drug reaction or taking the wrong dose. Other signs that there may be a problem include:

- Eating or sleeping habit changes
- Irritability, sadness, depression
- Lack of interest in usual activities
- Loss of coordination
- Trouble concentrating
- Unexplained chronic pain

*If you or someone you know displays one or more of these signs, consult a health care professional.*

## Medication Abuse

For older adults medication abuse is often unintended. Instances that may lead to abuse or dependency include:

- Overuse or extended use of some medications, especially **pain or sleeping pills**.
- Self-medicating** to relieve symptoms for illnesses other than for what the medication is intended, such as anxiety disorder or depression.
- Knowingly consuming alcohol** while taking medication, which may cause dangerous interactions with your medications.

## Managing Your Medications

Most adverse effects of medications are preventable if medications are well-managed. Make yourself a chart and fill in one column for each medication you take, both prescription and non-prescription. Update the chart regularly and share with each of your health care providers.

	Prescription # 1	Prescription # 2	Prescription # 3	Prescription # 4
Name of Medicine				
Reason Taken: condition or illness				
Description: shape & color)				
Dosage: how much & how often				
Additional instructions from doctor or pharmacist				