

Navigating Medications for Older Adults



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Welcome!

In Today's Presentation

Medication safety

Over the counter medications and supplements

Medication organization and adherence

Medication Disposal

Vaccines

How pharmacists can help

Myth vs Fact





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Medication Safety

Medication Safety Basics - <https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/5-medication-safety-tips-older-adults>

1

Take as prescribed

Take your medications exactly as directed by your healthcare professional.



If you have side effects talk with your healthcare professional.

2

Store properly & check dates

Store medications in a cool dry place and check expiration dates.



Expired or improperly stored medications may not work and could cause harm.

3

Know your medications

Be aware of possible interactions and side effects.



Interactions can happen with food, drinks (grapefruit juice, alcohol), or supplements (vitamins).

4

Read labels

Read drug labels and learn about warnings and precautions.



Know what to watch for

5

Keep an updated medication list

Include all prescription drugs, OTCs, vitamins, and dietary supplements.



Keep and copy at home and with you in a wallet or purse



Common Medication Problems - https://www.anguslakehealthcare.com/common-medication-side-effects-and-how-to-manage-them/?post_type=blog_post

Why side effects and problems can happen

More medications = higher risk for adverse effects.

As we age what a drug does to the body (pharmacodynamics) and what the body does to the drug (pharmacokinetics) can increase the risk for adverse effects.

Changes in the body as it ages can make it harder for the body to break down or flush out medications leading to the medication lingering in the body longer than it should.

Common Side Effects



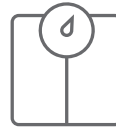
Dizziness &
loss of balance
FALL RISK



Headaches



Confusion or
memory loss



Weight
Fluctuations



Nausea &
vomiting

Side effects can be made worse by:
Smoking tobacco
Excessive caffeine or alcohol
Poor diet
New or worsening health conditions

Beers List

What is it?

- The American Geriatrics Society Beers Criteria for Potentially Inappropriate Medication Use in Older Adults
- Potentially inappropriate medications for adults of 65 years old

Why does it matter?

- Over 90% of older adults take at least one of the medications on this list

examples



Diphenhydramine
(Benadryl)

May cause confusion
drowsiness, and
delirium



Short-Acting
Insulin Alone

Higher risk of
hypoglycemia (low
blood sugar)



Warfarin

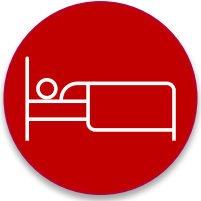
No longer
recommended for
AFib or VTE.



Sulfonylureas
(Glimepiride,
glimepiride, glipizide)

Higher risk of
hypoglycemia and CV
events

Medicines That Increase Fall Risk



Benzodiazepines & Z-drugs

alprazolam,
lorazepam,
zolpidem,
eszopiclone

Increases with
long-term use



Depression & Anxiety Medications

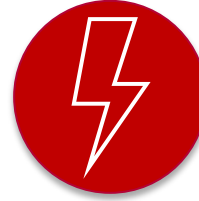
Sedative side
effects

Taking more than
one makes risk even
higher



Medications for Psychosis

Treats
schizophrenia and
bipolar disorder



Medications for Seizures

Sedative side
effects

May cause bone
thinning which may
lead to more
serious fractures



NSAIDs & Opioids

NSAIDs: can
increase risk of falls
due to effect on
blood pressure

Opioids: may cause
dizziness especially
at high doses or
with multiple meds



Muscle Relaxants

Used to treat
muscle spasm and
pain

Causes sedative
effects (baclofen
has highest risk)



Never stop a medication on your own. Talk to your pharmacist or doctor about any concerns



Exmples of Beers List Medications

- Muscle relaxants - Cyclobenzaprine (Flexeril) | Methocarbamol (Robaxin)
 - Associated with: Increased risk of falls | Confusion | Constipation | Urinary retention
- Anxiety/Insomnia medications - Benzodiazepines, Sleeping pills
 - Associated with: Increased risk of falls | Confusion | Long duration of action
- Anticholinergic drugs - Some Antidepressants, GI antispasmodics & Firstgeneration antihistamines (Benadryl)
 - Associated with: Confusion | Constipation | Dry mouth | Urinary retention | Blurry vision
- Estrogen pills/patches - Can increase risk of blood clots and breast cancer
- Sulfonylureas (Diabetes some “g” drugs)
 - Major adverse effect is hypoglycemia, which is more common in longer acting formulations (e.g., Glyburide (Glynase) | Glimepiride (Amaryl)); if used shorting acting formulation is preferred (e.g., Glipizide (Glucotrol))
- Proton pump inhibitors - Omeprazole, pantoprazole, etc
 - Associated with: Increased risk of C. Diff infection | Osteoporosis/Bone loss | Pneumonia | GI malignancies
- Rivaroxaban (Xarelto) | Warfarin (Coumadin) | Dabigatran (Pradaxa)
 - Replace with safer DOAC options for long term anticoagulation when possible (e.g., Apixiban (Eliquis))
 - Associated with increased risk of major (e.g. GI | Intracranial) bleeding





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OTCs & Supplements

Vitamins & Herbal Supplements

Supplements can interact with prescriptions

Natural products can still cause side effects

- “Natural” does not always mean safe

Always include vitamins and supplements in medication lists

Examples:

- St. John's Wort – sometimes used to ease mild to moderate depression, interacts with many prescription medications and can make them less effective or unsafe to use.
- Fish oil – sometimes used to reduce cardiovascular risk, can interact with blood thinners and increase risk of bleeding.
- Ginkgo biloba – can also thin the blood and increase bleeding risk



Over the Counter Medications: Use with Caution



NSAIDs

Ibuprofen (Advil),
Naproxen (Aleve)

Increased risk of GI
bleeding & ulcers

Kidney &
cardiovascular risk
with long term use



1st gen antihistamines

Diphenhydramine
(Benadryl), "PM"
products

Confusion, sedation,
memory loss

Increased fall risk

Prefer 2nd gen instead:
loratadine (Claritin)



Decongestants

Pseudoephedrine
(Sudafed)

Increased blood
pressure & heart
strain

Kidney &
cardiovascular risk
with long term use



Anticholinergics/ Sedating Agents

Oxybutynin
Meclizine

Dizziness, dry mouth,
constipation

Confusion and
increased fall risk



PPIs (Long term use)

Omeprazole
Pantoprazole

Possible bone density
loss

Increased fracture risk
with falls

This does not necessarily mean these products cannot be used, but your healthcare provider should be aware.
These medications should be used at the lowest dose and for the shortest duration for safest use.





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Medication Organization and Adherence

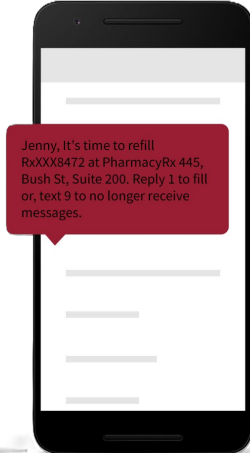
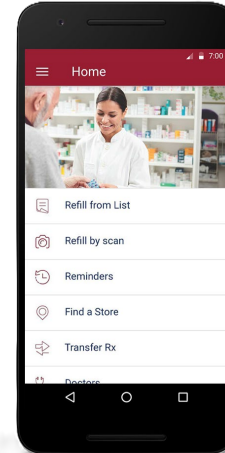
Medication Organization Tips

Use a pill organizer	7, 14, or 28 day options Think about the times of day you take medications For example, if you take medications 4 times a day, use a 7 day pill organizer separated into your morning, afternoon, evening, and bedtime doses
Use automatic pill dispenser	Dispenses pills automatically up to 4 times per day Some have a blinking light or alarm to remind you to take your medications
Mark medication lids with colored markers	Each color labels the bottle for what time of day you take it
Make a medication record	List each medication, when you take it, and how much you take Check it off when you take a dose
Alarms	This option is helpful and can be used along with any of the above methods



Medication Organization Tips

- Using 1 pharmacy for all of your prescriptions
- Updating your medication list at every provider visit
 - Ask for a copy of your current list and provide edits
- Take pictures of your bottles
- Pharmacy Apps
 - Pharmacies usually have a mobile app that patients can sign up for to help with easy medication management
 - Text/phone reminders for refills help patients keep track of when to renew medications
 - Get timely updates on the status of prescriptions
- Setting Timers or Alarms or daily “tasks” on your smart phone or home



Pill Identification Tools

- [WebMD](#)
- [Drugs.com](#)
- [Rx List](#)
- If a pill cannot be positively identified DO NOT take it



Pill Identifier

Search by imprint, shape or color

Use the pill finder to identify medications by visual appearance or medicine name.

Pill Imprint

Tip: Enter the imprint only first. Refine by color or shape if too many results display.

Color and shape (optional)

Enter the **letters** or **numbers**
from each side of your pill.



For this tablet you would enter

9 3 5510

[WebMD](#)[Conditions](#)[Drugs & Supplements](#)[Well-Being](#)[Symptom Checker](#)[Find a Doctor](#)[More](#)[Subscribe](#)[Log In](#)

Pill Identifier

[Help](#) | [No Test on Pill?](#)

Disclaimer: By continuing to view the drug information on this site, you agree to abide by the express [terms of use](#) governing the display and use of such information.

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RXLIST PILL IDENTIFICATION TOOL

Reviewed on 1/14/2026

Having trouble identifying prescription, over-the-counter (OTC), generic, and brand name pills and capsules? Quickly identify drugs and medications, including pill-identifying pictures, using the RxList Pill Identifier Tool.

Use the imprint, color, or shape of your pill (one, all or any combination of the fields below) and our Pill Identification Tool (Pill Finder) will show you pictures to review and identify your drug.



[Need help with the pill finder? Click for instructions.](#)





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Medication Disposal

Drug Take-Back Programs

- Many locations only take back pills, patches and ointments.
- Look into "take back" programs in your area
- DEA sponsors national "take back" days in the Fall and Spring usually in partnership with the State Police or local municipalities

Drug Disposal Kits

- Disposable or mail-back kits



Prescription Medication Disposal Locations

Most locations do not accept sharps, aerosols (inhalers), or liquids

IU Health Arnett Retail Pharmacy

(765) 448-8900
5165 McCarty Ln
Lafayette, IN 47905

Purdue Retail Pharmacy

(765) 494-1374
575 Stadium Mall Dr
West Lafayette, IN 47907

Meijer Pharmacy #137

(765) 449-9210
4901 SR 26 East
Lafayette, IN 47905

Meijer Pharmacy #186

(765) 637-4210
2636 US 52 W
West Lafayette, IN 47906

CVS Pharmacy #8657

(765) 447-1276
1725 Salem Street
Lafayette, IN 47904

Walmart

Supercenter #3851
(765) 477-9379
2347 Veterans Memorial
Parkway S
Lafayette, IN 47909

CVS Pharmacy #6667

(765) 659-2462
201 South Jackson Street
Frankfort, IN 46041

CVS Pharmacy #8651

(765) 497-3551
512 Sagamore Pkwy W
West Lafayette, IN 47906

CVS Pharmacy #6677

(765) 474-3834
3630 S 18th St
Lafayette, IN 47909

Walmart

Supercenter #2339
(765) 463-0201
2801 Northwestern Ave
West Lafayette, IN 47906

Tippecanoe County Sheriff's Office

(765) 423-9321
2640 Duncan Road
Lafayette, IN 47904

CVS Pharmacy #6674

(765) 564-4117
505 W Main Street
Delphi, IN 46923

CVS Pharmacy #8680

(765) 477-6666
2806 Old US Hwy 231 S
Lafayette, IN 47909

FDA Flush List - <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know/drug-disposal-fdas-flush-list-certain-medicines>

[U.S. Food & Drug Administration](#) does advise that “a small number of medicines have specific instructions to immediately flush down the toilet when no longer needed and a take-back option is not readily available. Common medications include:

- Fentanyl (orally administered), including Actiq and Duragesic
- Diazepam
- Hydrocodone (Vicodin, Norco and Vicoprofen)
- Hydromorphone (Dilaudid)
- Methadone and morphine
- Oxycodone and oxymorphone (Percocet, Percodan, and Opana)
- And others posing a risk to the community



Safe Medication Disposal Options

Make Your Own Sharps Container

A laundry detergent bottle is the best common household product to use for do-it-yourself sharps disposal:



- It should have a screw-on lid and be difficult to reach into the container.
- It should be made of a thick plastic that doesn't easily puncture.
- Clearly label the container "Sharps. Biohazard. Do Not Recycle."

Container Disposal

Talk to your doctor, pharmacist, or local government sanitation department about disposal options.



- Add sharps to the container until it's two-thirds full
- Screw on the lid tightly and seal with heavy-duty tape
- Dispose of the container as directed by your local regulations.



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Vaccinations

Vaccine Recommendations - <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/imz-schedules/adult-age.html>

		
ALL adults in age group should get the vaccine.	SOME adults in age group should get the vaccine.	Adults should talk to their health care provider to decide if this vaccine is right for them.

Vaccine	19-26 years	27-49 years	50-64 years	≥65 years
COVID-19	At least 1 dose of the current COVID-19 vaccine			65+: At least 2 doses.
Influenza/Flu	Every Year			
RSV	If pregnant during RSV season		If aged 50 through 74 years	If aged 75 years older
Tdap/Td	Tdap every pregnancy. Td/Tdap every 10 years for all adults.			
Shingles				
HPV		Aged 27-45 years		
Pneumococcal				
Hepatitis A				
Hepatitis B	Through 59 years			

- Annual:
 - Influenza
 - Covid*
- Once
 - RSV
 - 2 doses of Shingrix
- Tdap
 - If you received initial series, Tdap booster is recommended every 10 years
- Pneumonia
 - Age ≥ 50 years old one dose of PCV15, PCV20, or PCV21 is recommended
 - If administered PCV15, PPSV23 is recommended one year after initial vaccine





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How Pharmacists
can help

Pharmacy Services

Community Pharmacists

- Medication Therapy Management Services
 - Virtual or In-Person
- Medication Interaction check
- Affordability options
- Delivery
- OTC and supplement guidance
- Vaccinations

Ambulatory Services

- Disease state management
 - Weight Loss
 - Smoking Cessation
 - Anticoagulation
- Affordability Consultations



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Myth vs Fact

Myth vs Fact

Older adults differently to

Fact:

Aging changing how the body absorbs, metabolizes, and eliminates medications.



Myth vs Fact

Over the years, many myths about OTC medications are

Myth:

Many OTC medications can increase the risk of falls, confusion, bleeding, and drug interactions.



Myth vs Fact

Medication

Fact:

Confusion, fatigue, memory issues, and dizziness may be medication related rather than normal aging.

look like



Myth vs Fact

You should ask your doctor
about your medicine.

Myth:
Your pharmacist is a good resource for
questions about side effects, vaccines,
and drug interactions.



Myth vs Fact

It's ok to stop taking my medication when I'm feeling better

Myth:

Stopping medications without guidance can worsen chronic conditions or cause withdrawal effects.



Myth vs Fact

Herbal supplements should be
included in the list of medications.

Fact:
Herbal supplements can interact with OTC
medications and prescription
medications.



Myth vs Fact

Using a pill organizer can help improve medication management.

Fact:
Pill organizers can help reduce missed or duplicate doses.



Myth vs Fact

Vaccine

Fact:

Vaccines help protect you from serious complications and hospitalization.

healthy



Myth vs Fact

Vacc

Myth:

Older adults face a higher risk of complications from many vaccine preventable diseases.

dren.

References

- <https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/5-medication-safety-tips-older-adults>
- https://www.anguslakehealthcare.com/common-medication-side-effects-and-how-to-manage-them/?post_type=blog_post
- <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/24946-beers-criteria>
- <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/healthy-aging/in-depth/fall-risk/art-20572713>
- <https://agec.uams.edu/high-risk-over-the-counter-medications-for-older-adults/>
- <https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/mixing-medications-and-dietary-supplements-can-endanger-your-health>
- <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/safe-disposal-medicines/dont-be-tempted-use-expired-medicines>
- <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know/drug-disposal-fdas-flush-list-certain-medicines>
- <https://www.nfid.org/why-vaccinations-are-vital-for-older-adults/>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/imz-schedules/adult-age.html>

