

Facts on Drug Interactions and Older

As one grows older, the body handles medications differently. Drugs stay active in the body longer; therefore, one may need less medication.

Keep a written record of:

- All prescriptions, over the counter medications, herbals, and vitamins.
- Dosages, frequency, and time you've been using each prescription.
- Drug allergies and immunizations.
- Who prescribed each medication—and let EACH doctor know about each medication.

Do not use old medications!

They may have changed chemically, affect you adversely, or not work at all.

Side Effects:

- **Merely annoying:** a rash, a stomachache, nausea, or drowsiness.
- **Severe or life threatening:** Irregular heartbeat, prolonged vomiting, loss of consciousness, stroke, blindness, or seizures.
- Two drugs taken together can affect how each behaves in the body. If both have the same effect, they can have too great an impact or too little.
- Inform your doctor immediately of any side effects you weren't expecting or if you feel the medication is more harm than good.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR OR PHARMACIST:

- What is the name of the medicine and what is it supposed to do?
- How much should I take, when should I take it, and for how long?
- What foods, beverages, other medicines, or activities should I avoid while taking it?
- What are the possible side effects and what should I do if they occur?
- What written material is available about the medicine?

- **Remember: A medication strong enough to cure an ailment is also strong enough to cause harm, if not used wisely.**

Lynne D'Angelo, MS CRC
Franklin-Williamson Human Services, Inc
(618) 937-6483 ext. 7504

Linda Warner, EdM QMHP
Heartland Human Services, Inc
(217) 347-7179 ext. 1046

Juanita Suro, MA NCC MAC LCPC
Southeastern IL Counseling Centers, Inc.
(618) 395-4309 ext. 230