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Effective Solutions for Medication Management in the Aging Population

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Presenters



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Objectives

01

Identify the potential risks associated with medication mismanagement.

02

Understand common medication challenges and signs to watch for when meds are to blame for health issues.

03

Recognize risks of common conditions that impact medication management.

04

Help strengthen the role of the family in reducing the potential for medication risks.

05

Learn more about resources to help families feel confident about keeping older adults safe at home.



Research

- **20%** of surveyed older adults have some difficulty managing their medications
- **17%** of surveyed older adults feel overwhelmed, at least occasionally, by the medications they are taking
- **57%** of surveyed older adults are taking 4 or more prescription medications daily





Medication Concerns

- More than **50%** of those surveyed said they don't have conversations with their families about medications
- **77%** agreed that the ability to remain independent depends on one's ability to manage a complicated medication regimen





Common Medication Challenges

- Medication Adherence
 - Getting timely refills
 - Remembering to take medications
- Worrying about taking too many medications
- Miscommunication (multiple doctors)
- Adverse effects, side effects, and drug interactions




Common Medication Challenges

- Fear of asking questions
- High cost of medication
- Not taking medication in the proper way
 - Chewing or cutting pills, dosage errors
- Don't want to bother family members
- Managing four or more medications



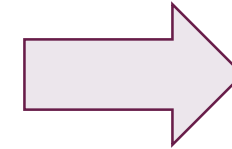
COVID-19 Impact on Medication Adherence

- Prescription volume has dipped below pre-pandemic levels
 - Economic fallout = 29% not taking as prescribed
- 5.4 million Americans lost health insurance
- Prevent treatment discontinuation and consequent disease flare
- 15.1% of patients with rheumatic disease suspended their medications



COVID-19 Impact on Medication Adherence

- Decreased Access to Care
- Shelter in Place
- Economic Concerns/Barriers
- New Challenges with Delivered Medications



**Decreased
Medication
Adherence**

**Consider the importance of proper medication management
during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

10 Warning Signs Meds are to Blame Health Issues

1. New symptoms
2. A changing appearance
3. Full pill bottles
4. Mobility issues
5. Changes in thinking,
reasoning or mental acuity



10 Warning Signs Meds are to Blame Health Issues

6. Difficulty performing activities of daily living
7. Trouble sleeping
8. Change(s) in appetite
9. Difficulty maintaining a home
10. Overall well-being





Chronic Conditions

- Arthritis
- COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease)
- Diabetes
- Heart disease
- Stroke



Cognitive Issues & Mental Health Conditions

- Alzheimer's disease and related dementias
- Depression
- Anxiety Disorder

Source: Potter, J. (2016).



Tips for Medication & Dementia

- Make eye contact, talk directly to the person and give them time to respond
- If the person refuses meds, remain calm and try again later
- Explain what you are doing—before you do it
- Describe objects instead of calling them by name
- Model the behavior for visual cues
- Use simple instructions, direct one step at a time
- Use pauses to emphasize what you are saying
- Do not argue with the person



Avoiding Medication Mistakes

- Get a pill organization system or service
- Make one doctor the gatekeeper to manage medications
- Know why the individual is taking the medications
- Call the doctor about any changes
- Keep regularly scheduled appointments





Medications & Hospital Discharge

- Review list of all medications to ensure compatibility and consult primary doctor
 - Existing medications (prior to hospitalization)
 - New medications (prescribed by the discharging physician)
 - Over-the-counter and supplements
- Pick up over-the-counter medications and prescriptions from the pharmacy
- Organize pills to ensure confusion doesn't lead to a medication mishap
- Document and track to ensure medication is taken as directed
- Watch for, and take note, of any reactions or side effects to new medication

Opioid Use and Misuse

- Hospitalization rate for geriatric misuse of opioids has quintupled in the past 20 years alone
- By 2020, estimated 5 million older adults will have substance abuse problems
- 1 in 4 older adults (29%) said they filled an opioid in the past two years
- 40% of older adults have chronic pain that is often treated with opioids
- Age is a risk factor for opioid overdose
- Older adults taking opioids are 4-5 times more likely to fall than those taking NSAIDS



Opioid Tips - Avoiding Misuse

- Consider non-opioid pain management
- Understand expectations of pain management
- Work with the doctor to create a plan and follow up regularly
- Take and store opioids properly
- Dispose of unused prescription opioids at the end of treatment
- Don't take opioids with alcohol and other medications like:
 - Benzodiazepines (ex: Xanax[®], Valium[®])
 - Muscle relaxants (ex: Soma[®], Flexeril[®])
 - Hypnotics (ex: Ambien[®], Lunesta[®])
 - Other prescription opioids



It's SIMPLE

The complexity of treatment can affect adherence. Providers should try to simplify the regimen whenever possible.

Simplify regimen

Impart knowledge

Modify patient beliefs and human behavior

Provide communication and trust

Leave the bias

Evaluate adherence

Safe Drug Disposal

- Dispose in household trash
- Flush medications down the toilet
- Recommended by the FDA to flush potentially dangerous medications
- Return to pharmacy or drug take-back day
- Hospice companies can dispose of medications

Follow these simple steps to dispose of medicines in the household trash

MIX
Mix medicines (do not crush tablets or capsules) with an unpalatable substance such as dirt, cat litter, or used coffee grounds;

PLACE
Place the mixture in a container such as a sealed plastic bag;

THROW
Throw the container in your household trash;

SCRATCH OUT
Scratch out all personal information on the prescription label of your empty pill bottle or empty medicine packaging to make it unreadable, then dispose of the container.

The infographic is a vertical stack of four colored boxes with corresponding text and images. The top box is brown and contains the introductory text. The second box is orange and shows a pile of dark soil with several pills scattered on top. The third box is yellow and shows a clear plastic bag filled with the soil and pill mixture. The fourth box is light blue and shows a silver trash can with a white arrow pointing into its open lid. The bottom box is light green and shows a white pill bottle with a black marker scribbled over the label.



Communication

- It's important to remain helpful and positive
- Empathize and try to put yourself in that person's shoes
- Don't forget to listen
- Ensure clear communication between the physician and the patient
- Make the patient feel a part of the solution



Recommended Resources

- Conversation starters:
LetsTalkAboutRx.com
- How to administer medications:
safemedication.com
- Medication management solution:
SimpleMedsRx.com
- Medication reminders service:
ontimerx.com
- For emergency situations:
SeniorEmergencyKit.com
- Hospital discharge guide:
ReturningHome.com
- Beers Criteria Medication List:
dcricri.org/beers-criteria-medication-list/
- Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration:
www.samhsa.gov
National Helpline 1-800-622-HELP
- RX Awareness Campaign:
www.cdc.gov/rxawareness/index.html
- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services:
Poison Help Hotline 1-800-222-1222
- Drug takeback information:
TakeBackDay.dea.gov



Questions?

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