

National Child Safety Council

<sup>®</sup>  
**senior safe**

# Drugs & Medicine

Prescriptions & Medications • Web Doctors • Childproofing



Presented by

**National Child  
Safety Council**

and your local

**Law Enforcement  
Department**



# Drugs & Medicine



## *A Real Danger*

**As we get older our bodies change, affecting the way foods and medications are absorbed, distributed, metabolized, and excreted, creating a greater risk of drug interactions and side effects.**

**Because of this, many seniors are sensitive to the effects of medications and require lower doses.**



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## *A Real Danger*

**Many senior adults see more than one doctor or specialist.**

**This is why it is highly important to share records and communicate about medications and treatments to avoid overmedicating, adverse drug reactions, or side effects.**

**It is estimated that 320,000 questionable prescriptions are written for seniors yearly.**

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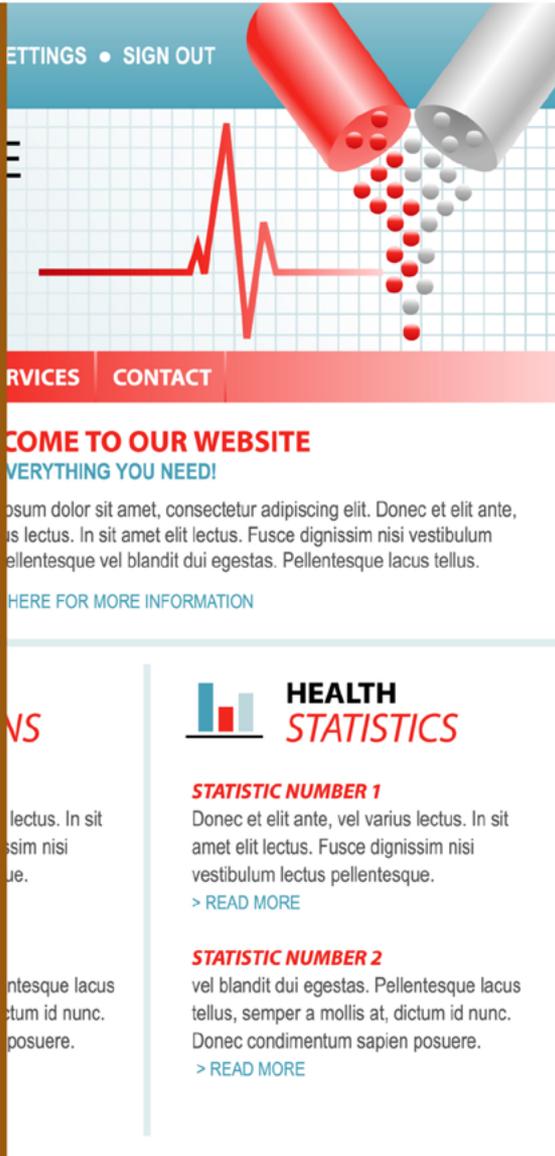
## *Web Doctors*

**The Internet offers information from medical advice and miracle “cures” to the purchase of medications.**

**Many people have even discovered valuable life-saving information from a web site.**

**It will not equal the importance of a personal exam.**

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## Web Doctors

**But, don't be fooled.**

**Anyone can create a web site providing professional-sounding advice or offers.**

**A “so-called expert” may have no medical or first-hand experience.**

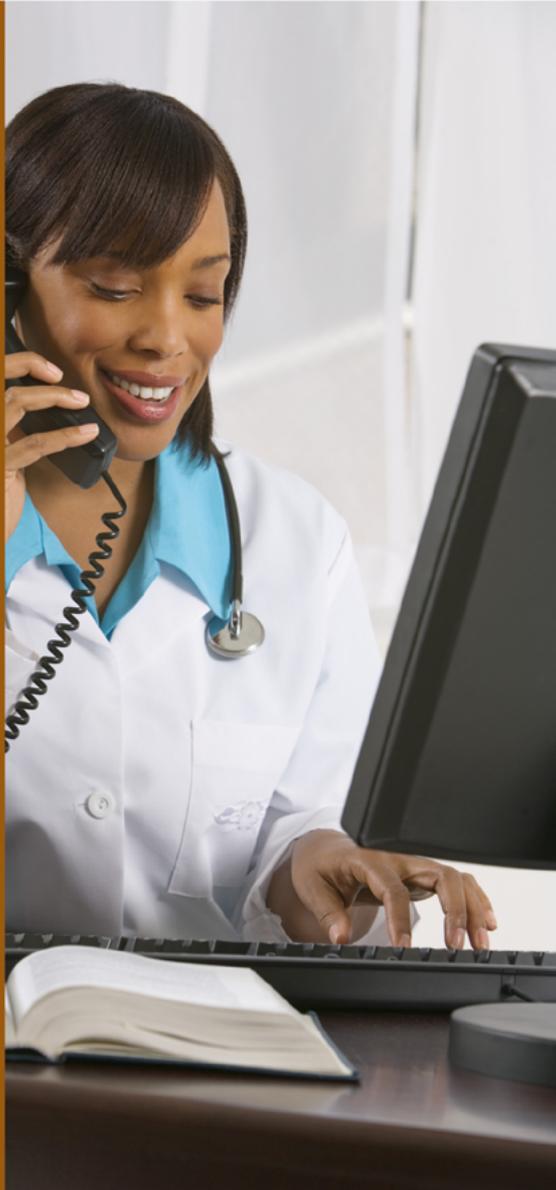
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## Web Doctors

- **Never trust a diagnosis from someone who has not examined you. (*It's unethical and illegal.*)**
- **Government health agencies sponsor some of the more reliable sites.**

**Drug misuse is 1 of the top problems that doctors see in senior adults.**



## *Web Doctors*

**A medical site run by experts should have:**

- their names and credentials listed up front.
- their mission statements or an explanation of their business plans.
- a separation between the editorial content and advertising/shopping opportunities.



## Web Doctors

**A medical site run by experts should have:**

- **information detailing who is providing the expert opinions and their references, origins of content, and current dates and updated postings. (*Medical information becomes outdated quickly.*)**

**If you are experiencing a true medical emergency, dial 9-1-1, not the Internet.**



## Web Doctors

**A medical site run by experts should have:**

- **confidentiality agreements.** *(Find out how any personal information you provide will be used.)*
- **listings of sponsors.** *(Consider how that might affect the direction of the information.)*

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## Childproofing

**If you don't have children (or pets) in your home on a regular basis, it's easy to overlook simple vital safety precautions.**

- 1. Keep medicines and chemicals locked up out of reach.**
- 2. Do not refer to medicine as candy.**
- 3. Never take medicine in front of children. (*They like to imitate.*)**
- 4. Only give children medicine that is intended for their age and weight.**

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## Childproofing

### Be responsible.

- **Dispose of medications in a safe manner.**
- **Avoid using wastebaskets where children and pets have easy access and may accidentally overdose.**

**The average senior takes  
2 - 7 daily medications.**

# Drugs & Medicine



## Childproofing

- Flush unwanted medications down the toilet or turn them in to your pharmacy where available. *(It's more environment-friendly.)* Many prescriptions for seniors are lethal to children.

### Dispose of any medication:

- that you are no longer taking.
- whose label you can no longer read.
- that is outdated.



## Childproofing

**Children like to explore. They find medications in:**

- purses
- pill organizers
- medicine cabinets
- first aid kits
- suitcases
- pockets
- lower drawers
- refrigerator shelves
- wastebaskets

**36% of child accidental poisonings from prescriptions are from a grandparent's medication.**

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## 10 Tips on Drugs & Medications

Whether you are taking;

- a prescription
- over-the-counter (OTC) medication
- vitamin or supplement
- or using a cream
- salve
- holistic preparation
- or herbal remedy

it is very important that you discuss them with your primary doctor and/or pharmacist and follow their instructions exactly to avoid dangerous reactions and side effects.

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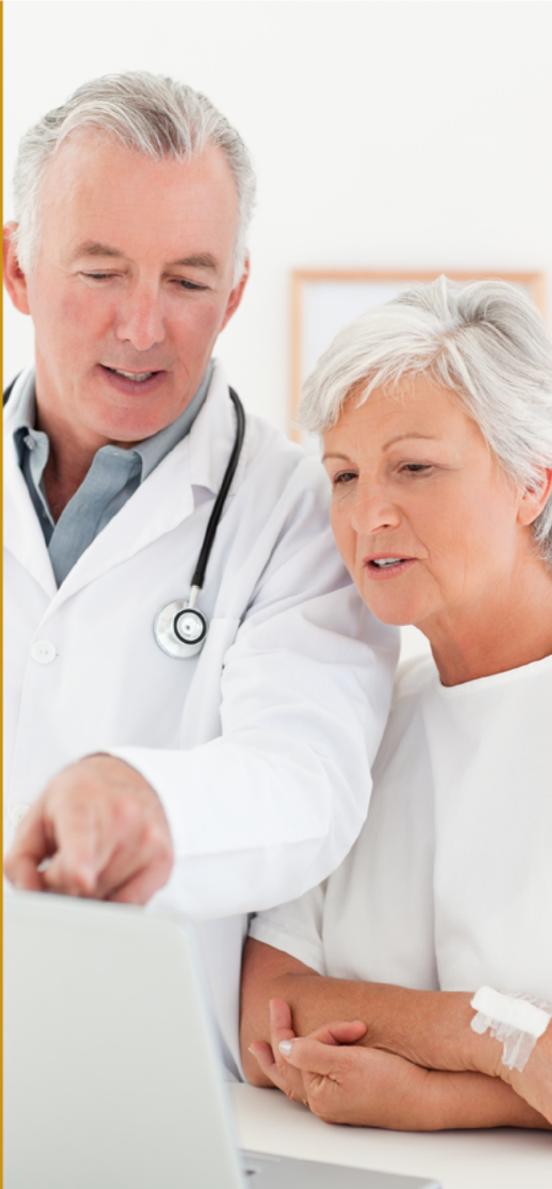


## 10 Tips on Drugs & Medications

**The more medications you take daily, the easier it is to lose track of how many to take and when they should be taken.**

**1. Make sure all of your doctors and any specialists communicate with each other on all medications and conditions.**

**According to the FDA, 40-75% of older adults take the wrong amount of medication or take it at the wrong time.**



## 10 *Tips on Drugs & Medications*

### **2. Make sure you understand how and when to take ALL of your medications.**

- **Have your doctor or pharmacist write instructions down if necessary.**
- **Find out if they need to be taken with anything (food, water, milk).**
- **Ask about food or drug interactions that may interfere with the medication.**
- **Read all instructions and know about the possible side effects or reactions.**
- **Know how long you need to take the medication.**

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## 10 Tips on Drugs & Medications

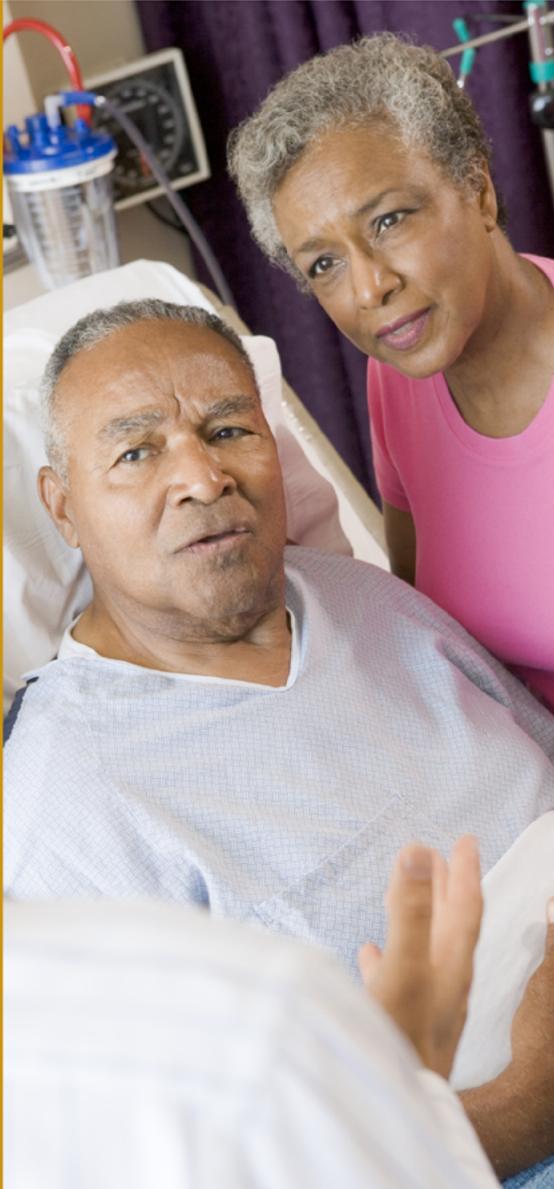
**3. Select over-the-counter products to treat only the symptoms you have.**

- Ask the pharmacist to make sure it won't react with any of your current medications.

**4. Make sure all medications are clearly labeled and in original containers.**

- If you have trouble reading a prescription label, ask for larger-print type or use a magnifying glass.

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## 10 Tips on Drugs & Medications

**5. Never take medication in the dark.**

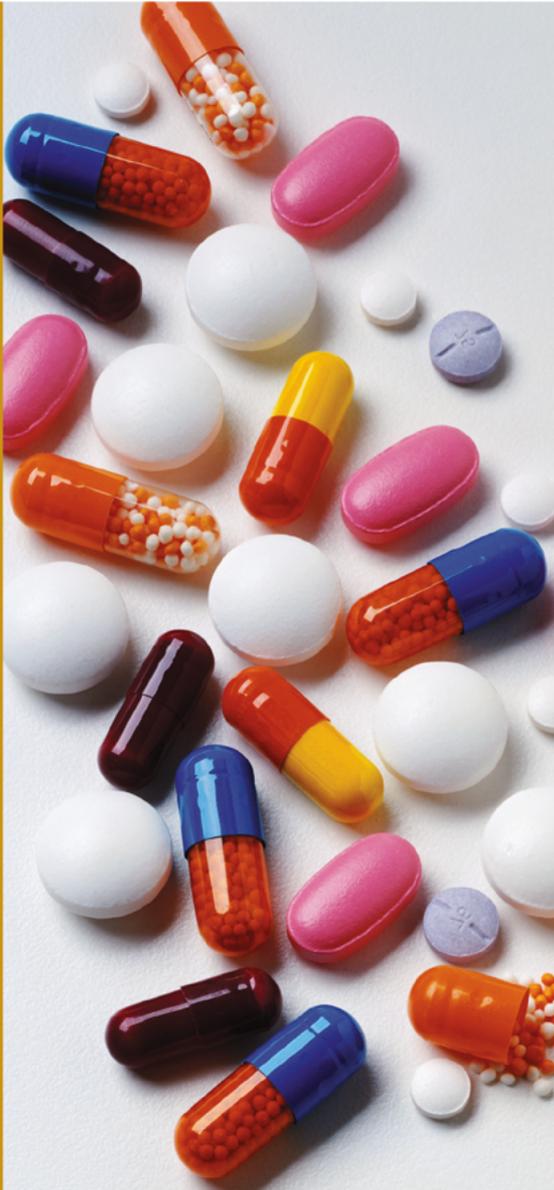
- You may make a mistake.

**6. Know what your medications look like.**

- If it doesn't look the same, contact your pharmacy or Poison Control Center about medication identification, interactions, and overdoses.

**Keep the POISON CONTROL CENTER number by every phone: 1-800-222-1222.**

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## 10 Tips on Drugs & Medications

### **7. Only take the amount prescribed for you.**

- Doubling up on medication will not make you better twice as fast. Never take someone else's medication.

### **8. Never stop taking a medication just because you feel better.**

- If you stop too soon you could hamper recovery or cause a reoccurrence.



## 10 Tips on Drugs & Medications

### 9. Develop a system for taking your medication.

- Use a container system.
- Use a timer if you are having problems taking medication at a certain time.
- Get prescriptions refilled before you need them to avoid running out.



## 10 Tips on Drugs & Medications

- 10. Before traveling, discuss your medications and any time changes with your doctor.**
- **Carry all medications with you instead of packing them in your suitcase.**

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**National Child Safety Council has developed senior safe<sup>®</sup> materials geared specifically to the needs of today's active Senior.**

**The senior safe<sup>®</sup> materials make it easy for law enforcement departments or other community groups to present vital information for daily living and safeguarding lives to a group of Seniors in any setting.**

**For a complete list of NCSC senior safe<sup>®</sup> materials and other programs, visit [www.nationalchildsafetycouncil.org](http://www.nationalchildsafetycouncil.org) or call 1-800-327-5107.**



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