MEDICATION MANAGEMENT
STRATEGIES FOR PATIENTS AND CAREGIVERS IN 2025

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MEDICATION MANAGEMENT
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Introduction

Polypharmacy is the simultaneous use of five or more prescription drugs.

Source: www.cdc.gov

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Polypharmacy is most common in aging populations where multiple chronic conditions coexist.

Source: www.cdc.gov

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According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), over 69.0% of adults in the U.S. aged 40–79 used at least 1 prescription drug in the past 30 days.

Source: www.cdc.gov

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While more than 22% of adults in the same group used at least 5 prescription drugs daily.

Commonly used drug types for seniors are lipid-lowering drugs, antidiabetic agents, and beta blockers.

Source: www.cdc.gov

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A study from Aston University in the U.K., found that helping loved ones manage so many daily medications is a major source of stress for caregivers.

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Caregivers reported several "**key burdens**":

1. **Ambiguity**, when caregivers weren't sure about the purpose of certain prescribed medications.

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2. **Fragmented care**, when their loved one had several healthcare providers; and

3. **Exclusion**, when doctors didn't include family caregivers in decisions or instructions.

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" When prescribing new drugs, doctors often consider things like side effects, but they equally need to think about how someone will actually manage taking them."

Clair Huckerby
Aston University Study Author

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How do you manage taking all your medications in 2025 and beyond?

That's the focus of this workshop.

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Learning Objective
The learning objective of this workshop is to provide LSU retirees with simple yet practical tips for daily long-term medication management.

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Key Topics
✓ Introduction to Medication Management
✓ What Seniors and their Caregivers Need to Know About Medication Management
✓ Questions to Ask Your Doctor
✓ Understanding Health Supplements
✓ Medication Management Tips

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Workshop Companion Materials

✓ LSU Medication Reminder Poster

✓ Personal Medications Form

✓ UnitedHealthcare App

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INTRODUCTION TO MEDICATION MANAGEMENT

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Prescription and over-the-counter medications help people of all ages manage diseases, control pain, and preserve and improve their health.

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When your doctor prescribes you a new medication, it's your job, or your caretaker's job, to ask them some important questions...

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- What does the new medication treat?
- Do I really need it?
- How often will I have to take the medication?

ASK ME QUESTIONS

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- Will the new prescription replace one or more of my current prescriptions?
- What are some possible side effects?

ASK ME QUESTIONS

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- How long will I have to take the new medication?
- How should I store the medicine?

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Remember!
The questions you ask should be based on the current medications, vitamins and supplements you're taking, so *ask your doctor to review your current medications* before prescribing a new one.

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Remember!
You can also ask your Pharmacist to ensure any new prescriptions won't conflict with your current prescriptions.

*Use the **Personal Medications Form** to write down details about all the medications and supplements you take.*

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Asking questions is the first step to better medication management and better overall health and wellness.

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WHAT SENIORS AND THEIR CAREGIVERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MEDICATION MANAGEMENT

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The list to the right includes the most common health conditions for which seniors are prescribed medications.

Common Senior Health Problems
- ✓ High blood pressure
- ✓ Diabetes
- ✓ Elevated cholesterol
- ✓ Heart disease
- ✓ Kidney problems
- ✓ Osteoporosis
- ✓ Arthritis
- ✓ Incontinence
- ✓ Depression
- ✓ Pain
- ✓ Sleep disorders

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Now let's look at what everyone needs to know to ensure those conditions are better controlled through proper medication management.

Common Senior Health Problems
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- ✓ Diabetes
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The more drugs you take, the more challenging it is to manage them.

The *American Geriatrics Society* suggests that taking too many medications may not be medically necessary and may interfere with a person's ability to function well.

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Medication side effects can lead to taking yet more medications.

If you experience a medication side effect like dizziness or constipation, you may report the symptom as a new problem to your doctor who might prescribe yet another medication.

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Everyone on your "Team" should be aware of every medication you take.

Your doctor, your spouse, your caregivers and your family members ("Team") should be aware of the medicines you take, why you take them, and how you take them.

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Report to your "Team" changes in how you feel mentally and physically.

Adding a new prescription can lead to mental and physiological changes.

As soon as you feel a new medication has you feeling different or unbalanced, let someone know.

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QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR

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The following are essential questions you should ask your primary care doctor and any specialist you visit.

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ABOUT THE MEDICATION

- What is the name of the medication, and what is it for?
- How does it work in my body?
- Is this medication necessary, or are there alternatives?

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DOSAGE AND INSTRUCTIONS

- How and when should I take it?
  (e.g., with food, water, morning/evening?)
- How long do I need to take it?
- What should I do if I miss a dose?
- Can I split, crush, or chew the pill?

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SIDE EFFECTS AND INTERACTIONS

- What are the possible side effects?
- Are there interactions with other medications?
  Can I drink alcohol or caffeine while on this medication?
- Should I avoid certain foods or supplements?

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MONITORING AND FOLLOW-UP
- How will I know if the medication is working?
- Do I need tests or follow-ups while taking it?
- What should I do if I don't feel better or if I start to feel worse?

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LIFESTYLE AND SAFETY
- Can I drive a car or operate machinery while taking this medication?
- What should I do in case I accidentally overmedicate or overdose?

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COST AND CONVENIENCE

- Is there a generic version?
- Can this medication be combined with others to reduce the number of pills I take?

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Asking those questions at your next doctor's appointment can lead to safer and better medication management.

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UNDERSTANDING HEALTH SUPPLEMENTS

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Health supplements can help seniors maintain vitality and prevent deficiencies, especially as nutrient absorption and dietary intake often decline with age.

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However, they should be tailored to individual needs and prescribed or recommended by a healthcare provider.

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The following are the most recommended supplements for older adults — and why they matter.

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Vitamin D
- **Why it's needed:** Supports bone health, immune function, and may help prevent falls.
- **Seniors are at risk because:** Aging skin makes less vitamin D, and older adults often get less sun exposure.
- **Dosage:** 800–1,000 IU/day is typical

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Calcium
- **Why it's needed:** Prevents osteoporosis and maintains strong bones.
- **Seniors are at risk because:** Aging leads to bone loss, especially in postmenopausal women.
- **Dosage:** 1,000–1,200 mg/ day

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Vitamin B12
- **Why it's needed:** Maintains nerve function, red blood cells, and energy.
- **Seniors are at risk because:** Reduced stomach acid decreases B12 absorption from food.
- **Dosage:** 250–500 mcg/day

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Magnesium
- **Why it's needed:** Supports muscle and nerve function, blood sugar regulation, and bone health.
- **Seniors are at risk because:** Aging kidneys and certain medications (e.g., diuretics) can lower levels.
- **Dosage:** 320–420 mg/day.

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Omega-3 Fatty Acids (Fish Oil)
- **Why it's needed:** Supports heart, brain, and eye health; reduces inflammation.
- **Seniors are at risk because:** Many diets lack adequate omega-3s.
- **Dosage:** 500–1,000 mg EPA + DHA daily; higher doses for heart disease under supervision.

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Probiotics
- **Why it's needed:** Aids digestion, immune function, and may reduce antibiotic-related diarrhea.
- **Seniors are at risk because:** Gut microbiome changes with age.
- **Dosage:** Depends on strain and condition being treated.

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Fiber (e.g., psyllium, inulin)
- **Why it's needed:** Supports digestion, heart health, and blood sugar control.
- **Seniors are at risk because:** Lower dietary intake and slower digestion.
- **Dosage:** 25–30 grams/day (including from your diet).

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Multivitamin (Targeted for 50+ adults)
- **Why it's needed:** Covers potential gaps in nutrients like zinc, selenium, and vitamins A, C, and E.
- **Seniors are at risk because:** Reduced food variety or appetite.
- **Dosage:** Follow label, once daily.

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Caution and Final Tips

Avoid mega doses: Too much of certain vitamins (like A or iron) can be harmful.

Check interactions: Supplements can affect medications like blood thinners and vitamin K.

Talk to a provider: Always consult a doctor or pharmacist before starting new supplements.

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Create a Medications List

Learning to properly keep track of and manage medications is one of the most important things you can do, because taking the wrong medicine at the wrong time can be disastrous.

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Create a Medications List (Continued)

Use the *Personal Medications List* that accompanies this workshop to keep vital information about your medications in a single place that you can share with your caregivers, doctors, and pharmacist.

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Fill Your Prescriptions at One Pharmacy

Fill all your prescriptions at the same pharmacy to not only makes it easier, but to ensure that you are getting good advice.

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Fill Your Prescriptions at One Pharmacy (Continued)

"Using one pharmacy keeps your medication records in one place, so the pharmacist can evaluate your risk and work with your doctor to avoid potential problems."

Jessica Merry, Doctor of Pharmacy
The Johns Hopkins Hospital

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Use a Medication Reminder (Continued)

Set an alarm on your clock, watch or smartphone to let you know it's time to take your medications.

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Use a Medication Reminder (Continued)

There are several pill reminder apps available for download through Google and Apple.

ANDROID APP ON
Google play

Available on the
App Store

If you need help finding or downloading, or installing an app, ask a caregiver or any teenager for help.

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Since you've made it the far in life, continue to live your best life with proper medication management!

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