

THE PATIENT PRESCRIPTION

Your Health Begins Here



Quality Spotlight - Medication Management

HopeHealth's quality focus for September is medication management. This clinical focus includes measures like medication adherence, appropriate antibiotic use, statin use, and utilization of the HopeHealth Pharmacy.

Keep reading to learn about the prescription cascade concept and ways to avoid it. [Click here](#) for more information about the HopeHealth Pharmacy.

Pill Pile Ups and the Prescription Cascade

HopeHealth

How many medications do you or a loved one take each day? Americans are routinely prescribed medications, with more added for older individuals and others with complex medical conditions. Research indicates that almost 70% of Americans ages 40-79 take one medication a day, and over 20% take five or more pills daily.

Medical conditions that require visits to specialty doctors, procedures, lab work, numerous health care visits, or hospitalizations often involve additional medications. For many, it can be time-consuming and confusing to keep up with multiple pills, dosing times, and whether a pill is taken with or without food. If vitamins and other supplements are added, the mix can lead to challenges with medication interactions and side effects.

Polypharmacy refers to an individual regularly taking five or more medications each day. While many medications are often needed, this amount can increase the risk of drug-to-drug interactions. In addition, certain foods or supplements may also react with medications. These interactions can cause multiple side effects, including dizziness, fatigue, nausea, confusion, headaches, diarrhea, and constipation.

A side effect can be harmful or interfere with everyday life. Medications are meant to help, not harm, which is why knowing how each medication works is vital.

Medication adherence with multiple pills can become a challenge, and people may stop taking medications due to negative side effects or cost. In the older population, polypharmacy can increase the risk of confusion and falls, and in some cases, mixing too many medications can even lead to dementia symptoms. While numerous medications are often necessary for complex medical conditions, it's important to be aware of risks and side effects to help maximize the benefits of your medication regimen.

Certain drugs can also have “normal” side effects, and some medications may be used solely for their side effects. For example, diphenhydramine, marketed as Benadryl, is a mild antihistamine used for colds and allergies, with a common side effect of drowsiness. This medication may be recommended to adults for sleep and is a common ingredient found in most over-the-counter sleep aids.

Often, a new medication is necessary to treat a side effect. For example, pain medication often causes constipation, and a laxative may be prescribed to remedy this. A potential issue to watch out for with polypharmacy is called the prescription cascade. This is when the side effects of one medication are mistakenly viewed as a new medical condition, and a second new medication is prescribed. One example is when an anti-hypertensive medication is prescribed, and the hypertension is unknowingly caused by the use of an over-the-counter NSAID or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug such as ibuprofen.

There are several ways to help prevent a prescription cascade. It's important to be informed and act as an advocate for yourself or a loved one to ensure medication safety.

Keep an updated list of all medications and take the list or a bag of your actual medications to each provider visit. Include any over-the-counter medications you routinely use along with dietary supplements, including vitamins, minerals, or herbs. Many people are unaware that dietary supplements and over-the-counter medications are powerful and can interact with prescription medications, increasing the risk of side effects.

Any time a new medication is prescribed, make sure you know why it is being prescribed and how to take it. Read the medication safety information for potential side effects and the best time to take it. Ask your provider how it may interact with prescription drugs you are already taking. Notice anything out of the ordinary for the next 30 days, including headaches, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, or confusion. Contact your health care provider immediately with any new issues or side effects related to the new medication.

Use one pharmacy for all your medications. This can help prevent potential drug reactions from medication mix-ups. Ask to speak to a pharmacist any time you have questions about your medications or when starting a new medication. Your pharmacist is a wonderful resource for questions like how and when to take medications to optimize effectiveness, minimize side effects, and reduce potential drug interactions.

Utilize a pill organizer to make it easier to manage multiple medications each day. An organizer can help you manage your daily medication routine by providing separate compartments for morning, afternoon, evening, and bedtime pills.

Request a medication review visit at least annually with your primary health care provider to review all your current medications. A comprehensive medication review is covered by Medicare Part D. This time with your provider is important to review what each medication is used for, the dosage, and how to take it, and to discuss any problems you may be having.

HopeHealth pharmacists provide care and expertise to patients with chronic conditions and directly assist patients and their health care providers with medication management. HopeHealth patients can conveniently receive their medications at the same location where they receive primary or specialty medical services. Free delivery is also available. Make the switch to the HopeHealth Pharmacy and let us help you manage your medications and feel your best!

Program Spotlight - Seniors with Hope



Seniors with Hope is a free, public event for seniors facilitated by HopeHealth. Each session focuses on different topics relating to healthy senior living and includes light refreshments and door prize drawings.

Upcoming Events

All events are from 2-3:30pm except Orangeburg, which is from 11am – 12:30pm.

Seniors with Hope at Bethea: Oct. 1, Nov. 5, Dec. 3
157 Home Avenue, Darlington

Seniors with Hope at Streater: Oct. 8, Nov. 12, Dec. 10
301 N. Dargan Street, Florence

Seniors with Hope in Kingstree: Oct. 15, Nov. 19, Dec. 17
520 Thurgood Marshall Hwy., Kingstree

Seniors with Hope in Orangeburg: Oct. 21, Nov. 25, Dec. 23
1857 Joe S. Jeffords Hwy., Orangeburg

PrEP Awareness Month Block Party



Join us at SC State University for a PrEP awareness month Block Party. HopeHealth will be providing free HIV testing and PrEP information.

The event will take place on Wednesday, September 30, from 10am - 2pm at the Manning and Bradham field near Brooks Health Center on the campus of South Carolina State University. No sign-up necessary! Contact Brooks Health Center or HopeHealth in Orangeburg at (803) 535-2272 for questions.

Recipe Spotlight

Mediterranean White Bean Salad

This delicious recipe serves 6.

Ingredients:

- 1 15-ounce can white (cannellini) beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 small or 1 large cucumber, chopped
- 1-2 Tbs. red onion, chopped
- ½ red bell pepper, chopped
- 10 ounces grape or cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1/3 cup kalamata olives, pitted and chopped
- 1 Tbs. fresh parsley, chopped
- ½ tsp. dried oregano
- ½ cup crumbled feta cheese
- 1 Tbs. olive oil
- 1 Tbs. red wine vinegar
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

- Add all ingredients to a salad bowl and toss. Serve immediately or chill first to let the flavors meld.

Tips:

- Feel free to add other vegetables, including celery, mushrooms, broccoli, cauliflower, or carrots.



Visit hope-health.org/events to learn about and sign up for free community classes offered by HopeHealth! Topics range from healthy cooking to diabetes management, prioritizing movement, carbohydrate counting, and more.

How satisfied were you with the content of this email?

5 - Very Satisfied

4 - Satisfied

3 - Neutral

2 - Dissatisfied

1 - Very Dissatisfied

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