



HEALTH AWARENESS

Avoiding Medication Errors

(NAPSA)—Knowing more about the medications you take could save your life. That's because medication errors cause at least one death every day and harm approximately 1.5 million people annually in the United States, according to the Institute of Medicine.

As medication use continues to rise, it's more important than ever that patients and health care providers work together to improve communication.

So how can patients stay informed and take medication safety into their own hands? The American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) believes a medication list is an effective tool to help facilitate the necessary and critical line of communication between patients and those in the health system to reduce the number of medical errors that occur each year.

The organization offers the following tips to help you avoid medication errors:

- **Ask questions.** Learn the name of the medications you take, including the dose, what each drug is used for, and how often you should take it.

- **Use the same pharmacy to fill prescriptions.** That way, the pharmacist can detect possible drug interactions.

- **Jot it down.** Keep a list of all the medications you take. To make it easier for you, ASHP and the ASHP Foundation developed My Medicine List™, a free online tool available at SafeMedication.com.



Here's a healthy idea: Keep a list of all the medicines you take and show it to your doctor and pharmacist.

- **Don't leave home without it.** Take your medication list to all your health care visits and make sure it includes the medication name, who prescribed it, the dosage, frequency and notes about any side effects that have bothered you. Don't forget to include nonprescription medicine, vitamins and herbal medicine.

- **Don't share.** Never take medications prescribed for someone else, which may be the wrong dose for you and may interact with other medications you take.

- **Learn more.** For more information about using your medications safely, visit www.SafeMedication.com.