

HEALTH ALERT!

Consumer Guide To Drugs Offers Options

(NAPSA)—Learning more about the medicines you take can help you discuss them with your doctors and make drug therapy as effective—and safe—as possible.

This knowledge is especially important after the age of 50 when most people have more than one chronic medical condition. People between 55 and 64 may take an average of eight prescriptions during the course of one year.

The more medications taken, the more likely a person is to have an adverse drug reaction. Also, as people get older, some drugs may be ineffective or more toxic than equally effective alternatives.

Commonly prescribed drugs may produce side effects such as daytime drowsiness and loss of coordination, yet 25 percent of patients over 65 are prescribed one or more of these drugs.

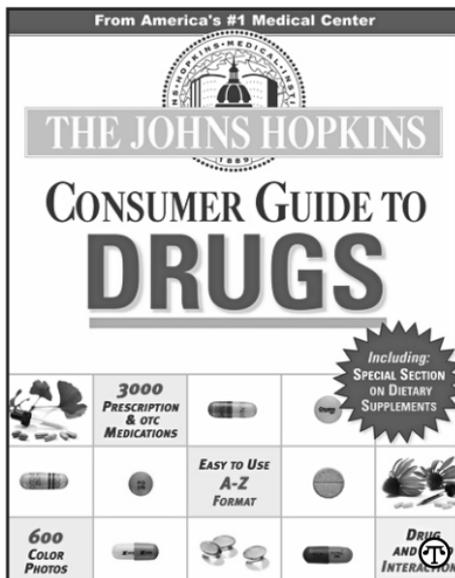
Also, vitamins and mineral supplements may counteract or even react dangerously with prescribed medications.

There are drugs that do not mix with grapefruit juice; there are herbal drugs that do not mix with prescription drugs; there are prescription drugs that do not mix with each other.

Fortunately, reliable medical resources can make it easier to understand the options.

For example, *The Johns Hopkins Complete Consumer Guide to Drugs* (Rebus, Inc., \$39.95), offers the latest information on more than 2,300 brand-name and 700 generic prescription and over-the-counter drugs, including herbal and dietary supplements.

The emphasis is on medications used to treat the 100 med-



A new guide profiles medications most often prescribed for people over 50.

ical disorders and health concerns that most often affect people over 50: cancer; blood disorders; dental and oral disorders; the digestive system; the ears, nose and throat; eyes; the heart; and lungs.

Adverse reactions to drugs are seven times more common in older people than younger ones and account for 20 percent of all hospitalizations among older adults. The guide may help to reduce these statistics by providing a home resource that is comprehensive and accessible.

The book is available in bookstores nationwide, online at www.hopkinsafter50.com, or by calling 1-386-477-6313. A companion volume, *The Johns Hopkins Consumer Guide to Medical Tests* (\$39.95) offers information on more than 170 diagnostic and screening tests.