

News For Older Americans

Helping Older Americans Use OTC Medicines Wisely

(NAPSA)—There are more than 100,000 over-the-counter (OTC) medicines on the market today, and those age 60 and over use more than one-third of all OTCs purchased. In an effort to provide consumers with information on the safe use of OTC medicines, the Consumer Health Education Center (CHEC) launched a national education campaign to help mature Americans better manage their health, specifically regarding the OTC medicines they rely on.

According to Linda Suydam, D.P.A., president of CHEC, the campaign includes seminars across the country, each featuring a local pharmacist to answer questions and provide tips for the safe use of OTC medicines.

“All consumers need to play an active role in their personal health care decisions, including becoming more informed about all of their medications—prescription and OTC,” says Suydam.

CHEC recommends the following seven simple steps to ensure safe and effective OTC use:

- Always read and follow the OTC medicine’s Drug Facts label.
- Never take more than one medicine with the same active ingredient unless instructed by a doctor.
- Choose medicines that treat only the symptoms you have.
- Talk to a doctor if taking an OTC becomes more than a temporary practice or if symptoms do not go away.
- Create a list of all the medicines you take and share your list with your health care professionals.
- Tell your health care professionals about your full medical



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history and diet.

- Bring any questions you have to your health care professionals, such as your doctor, nurse, nurse practitioner or pharmacist.

According to a recent survey sponsored by CHEC and the Alliance for Aging Research, two out of every three older Americans are confident that they understand the Drug Facts label on OTC medicines. And while almost 80 percent say they are very likely to follow the recommended dose, some do not pay attention to the active ingredients in their medicines. “CHEC is dedicated to making sure this vital population understands the importance of reading medicine labels thoroughly and paying particular attention to the active ingredients in all medicines,” says Suydam.

CHEC’s Drug Facts for Mature Americans seminars will take place throughout 2007 in Michigan, Pennsylvania, California and Florida. To learn more, visit www.CHECforbetterhealth.org.