

# STAYING ON TRACK WITH YOUR RX.



## Information from our House to yours.

The use of prescription medication can be life-changing for many. It can increase a person's quality of life by offering relief from pain or symptoms and reduce the likelihood of adverse events related to a medical condition. That said, prescription medication should always be approached with care, especially for those seniors with multiple health concerns.

It is important that physicians have a complete list of every medication—prescription or over the counter—being taken to properly manage medication and avoid negative interactions and side effects. They should also schedule prescription checkups, or medication reviews, with their patients to maintain healthy dosages.

### AVOIDING ERRORS IN TAKING MEDICATION.

When taking medication, it is important to follow the instruction of the prescribing physician. However, older adults can make unintentional errors when taking their medication. Common causes and suggested solutions include:

#### VISION PROBLEMS

Cause	Solution
Often medications and their packaging look similar and the fine print on bottle labels is difficult to read.	Many pharmacies offer labels with large print and even labels featuring braille instructions. Another option is the use of a talking medication system.

#### MEMORY LOSS

Cause	Solution
With trouble remembering if they've already taken a medication, people may take multiple doses.	A pill box, dispenser or automated reminder, via an in-home device or phone, may be sufficient to help organize and track their medications.

#### LIMITED INCOME

Cause	Solution
By trying to save money or stretch out a prescription, seniors may resort to splitting pills, taking a lesser dose or going without their medication for long stretches of time.	Use generic prescription drugs whenever possible and inquire with the pharmacist about possible discount programs.

#### PROBLEMS WITH SWALLOWING

Cause	Solution
Chewing a pill or crushing and mixing them in water can alter the benefits of the medicine.	Ask the doctor or pharmacist if the drug comes in smaller pills that are easier to swallow or if a liquid is available.

#### HEARING LOSS

Cause	Solution
At times, seniors have difficulty hearing and understanding instructions that the doctor or pharmacist provides.	Encourage them to ask the doctor to repeat themselves, use proper hearing devices like hearing aids, or have a family caregiver or professional caregiver accompany them to appointments.



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## COMMON MEDICATION MISTAKES

With the guidance of their physicians and proper medication, seniors can effectively enjoy a life of health and wellness. However, mistakes can happen and taking medications incorrectly can have consequences. Some frequent mistakes include:

**Lack of awareness of expiration dates** | When seniors are unaware of when medications expire, they risk experiencing problems with safety or efficacy.

**Taking an incorrect dosage** | The more drugs being taken, the likelier the incident of dosage issues.

**Rate of usage** | Similar to dosage, taking multiple medications can lead to confusion regarding how many times a drug is taken in a day.

**Not taking drugs at designated times of day** | It is important to adhere to a set time schedule for taking medications.

**Combining drugs without physician guidance** | It is imperative to inform your doctor if you're taking any additional over-the-counter medications, supplements or vitamins that may interfere with your prescriptions.

## SIGNS OF MEDICATION MISMANAGEMENT.

Some of the most common signs to look for to indicate a senior's medications are being mismanaged include:

**The occurrence of new symptoms**  
Mistakes in taking medications or simply the combination of multiple medications can cause new symptoms to appear, such as a change in appearance, skin tone or weight, or fluid retention. Consult your doctor to ensure your medications are not causing adverse symptoms.

**Dangerous side effects** | It is common for medications to cause side effects such as such as dizziness, nausea, lightheadedness or sleepiness. It is important to alert the prescribing physician if any of these occur.

**Unused Rx** | If a prescribed medication is not being used at all, this can cause any number of issues and may result in a serious medical emergency.

**Out-of-date medication** | Old medication can be an indicator of mismanagement somewhere along the line.



**LIVING WELL IS BEING WELL.**  
*American House Senior Living Communities*

*At American House, our mission, Living Well Is Being Well,<sup>™</sup> promotes whole-person health and wellness of the mind, body and spirit. Our brain health, wellness and enhanced mindfulness programs help our residents discover and grow and make personal choices that improve and support a healthy lifestyle.*

*Our maintenance-free lifestyle is designed around our belief that if you live well, you will be well. It presents our residents with extra time to concentrate on health and wellness goals, explore new interests and continue their story in the company of friends and loved ones.*

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