

Appendix B

Patient Education Sheet #1

FDA Consumer Guidelines For Use of Medications

The healthcare team consists of many members: physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses, pharmacists and YOU. To reduce the risks related to using medicines and to get the maximum benefit, you need to play an active role on the team. This includes the following actions on your part:

Speak up

The more information your healthcare team members know about you, the better they can develop a plan of care tailored to you. The members of your team need to know:

- your complete medical history
- any allergies and sensitivities you have
- the medications you take routinely and occasionally-prescription and over-the-counter
- any dietary supplements you use, including vitamins and herbals
- other therapies you use
- anything that may affect your ability to use the medication

Ask questions

Your healthcare team members help you make the best-informed choices, but **you have to ask the right questions**. When you meet with a team member, have your questions written down and take notes.

You may also want to bring along a friend or relative to help you understand and remember the answers.

Use the question guide below to help you gather the information you need from your healthcare team. If you don't understand an answer, ask again.

Learn the facts

Before you purchase a prescription or over-the-counter medicine, learn and understand as much about it as you can, including:

- generic and brand names
- active ingredients
- proper uses--(indications/contraindications)
- instructions
- warnings and precautions
- interactions--with food, dietary supplements, other medicines
- side effects/adverse reactions
- expiration dates

Drug information designed for the consumer is available from a variety of sources, your pharmacy, the manufacturer, the library, the bookstore, and the Internet. If there is something you don't understand, ask your healthcare team.

Balance the benefits and risks-Make Your Decision

After you have exchanged all the information, weigh all your options. At this point you must decide if the benefits you hope to achieve from the medicine outweigh its known risks. The final choice is yours.

Follow directions

When you are ready to use the medicine, maximize the benefits and minimize the risks by following the instructions printed on the drug label:

- *Read the label every time you fill your prescription--before you leave the pharmacy. Be sure you have the right medicine and understand how to use it.*
- *Read the label every time you are about to use the medicine--to be sure it's the right medicine, for the right patient, in the right amount, in the right way, at the right time.*
- *Take the recommended dose exactly as prescribed--no matter how tempted you are to use more to feel better faster.*
- *Finish all the medicine as directed--even if you start to feel better before all your medicine is completed.*

Report back to the team

Pay attention to how you feel and notify your health care team of any problems.

If you have doubts that the medicine is working effectively, don't stop taking it without checking with the team. Some medications take longer to show a benefit, and some need to be withdrawn gradually to decrease undesirable effects. If you experience a side effect, let your healthcare team know immediately. An adjustment in the dosage or a change in medication may be needed.

Multiple patient education tools have been developed and are presented here as patient teaching tools for nurses to download and utilize in teaching patients.

Patient Education – Sheet #2

Five Steps to Safer Health Care

This fact sheet was developed by Federal agencies in the Quality Interagency Coordination (QulC) Task Force, in partnership with other health care purchasers and providers (AHRQ, 2003).

- 1. Speak up if you have questions or concerns.** Choose a doctor or other healthcare provider who you feel comfortable talking to about your health and treatment. Take a relative or friend with you if this will help you ask questions and understand the answers. It's okay to ask questions and to expect answers you can understand.
- 2. Keep a list of all the medicines you take.** Tell your doctor or other healthcare provider and pharmacist about the medicines that you take; provide them a list of all the medications, including over-the-counter medicines such as aspirin, ibuprofen, and dietary supplements like vitamins and herbals. Tell them about any drug allergies you have.

Ask the pharmacist about side effects and what foods or other things to avoid while taking the medicine. When you get your medicine, read the label, including warnings. Make sure it is what your prescriber ordered, and you know how to use it. If the medicine looks different than you expected, ask the pharmacist about it.

- 3. Make sure you get the results of any test or procedure.** Ask your doctor or nurse when and how you will get the results of tests or procedures. If you do not get them when expected—in person, on the phone, or in the mail—don't assume the results are fine. Call your doctor and ask for them. Ask what the results mean for your care.
- 4. Talk with your doctor and health care team about your options if you need hospital care.** If you have more than one hospital to choose from, ask your doctor which one has the best care and results for your condition. Hospitals do a good job of treating a wide range of problems. However, for some procedures (such as heart bypass surgery), research shows results often are better at hospitals doing a lot of these procedures. Also, before you leave the hospital, be sure to ask about follow-up care, and be sure you understand the instructions.
- 5. Make sure you understand what will happen if you need surgery.** Ask your doctor and surgeon:
 - Who will take charge of my care while I'm in the hospital?
 - Exactly what will you be doing?
 - How long will it take?
 - What will happen after the surgery?
 - How can I expect to feel during recovery?

Tell the surgeon, anesthesiologist, and nurses if you have allergies or have ever had a bad reaction to anesthesia. Make sure you, your doctor, and your surgeon all agree on exactly what will be done during the operation.

Patient Education – Sheet #3

20 TIPS TO HELP PREVENT MEDICAL ERRORS

PATIENT FACT SHEET

What Can You Do? Be Involved in Your Health Care

1. **The single most important way you can help to prevent errors is to be an active member of your healthcare team.**

That means taking part in every decision about your healthcare. Research shows that patients who are more involved with their care tend to get better results. Some specific tips, based on the latest scientific evidence about what works best, follow.

Medicines

2. **Make sure that all of your doctors know about everything you are taking. This includes prescription and over-the-counter medicines, and dietary supplements such as vitamins and herbs.**

At least once a year, bring all of your medicines and supplements with you to your doctor. "Brown bagging" your medicines can help you and your doctor talk about them and find out if there are any problems. It can also help your doctor keep your records up to date, which can help you get better quality care.

3. **Make sure your doctor knows about any allergies and adverse reactions you have had to medicines.**

This can help you avoid getting a medicine that can harm you.

4. **When your doctor writes you a prescription, make sure you can read it.**

If you can't read your doctor's handwriting, your pharmacist might not be able to either.

5. **Ask for information about your medicines in terms you can understand—both when your medicines are prescribed and when you receive them.**

- What is the medicine for?
- How am I supposed to take it, and for how long?
- What side effects are likely? What do I do if they occur?
- Is this medicine safe to take with other medicines or dietary supplements I am taking?
- What food, drink, or activities should I avoid while taking this medicine?

6. **When you pick up your medicine from the pharmacy, ask: Is this the medicine that my doctor prescribed?**

A study by the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Allied Health Sciences found that 88 percent of medicine errors involved the wrong drug or the wrong dose.

7. If you have any questions about the directions on your medicine labels, ask.

Medicine labels can be hard to understand. For example, ask if "four doses daily" means taking a dose every 6 hours around the clock or just during regular waking hours.

8. Ask your pharmacist for the best device to measure your liquid medicine. Also, ask questions if you're not sure how to use it.

Research shows that many people do not understand the right way to measure liquid medicines. For example, many use household teaspoons, which often do not hold a true teaspoon of liquid. Special devices, like marked syringes, help people to measure the right dose. Being told how to use the devices helps even more.

9. Ask for written information about the side effects your medicine could cause.

If you know what might happen, you will be better prepared if it does—or, if something unexpected happens instead. That way, you can report the problem right away and get help before it gets worse. A study found that written information about medicines can help patients recognize problem side effects and then give that information to their doctor or pharmacist.

Hospital Stays

10. If you have a choice, choose a hospital at which many patients have the procedure or surgery you need.

Research shows that patients tend to have better results when they are treated in hospitals that have a great deal of experience with their condition.

11. If you are in a hospital, consider asking all healthcare workers who have direct contact with you whether they have washed their hands.

Handwashing is an important way to prevent the spread of infections in hospitals. Yet, it is not done regularly or thoroughly enough. A recent study found that when patients checked whether healthcare workers washed their hands, the workers washed their hands more often and used more soap.

12. When you are being discharged from the hospital, ask your doctor to explain the treatment plan you will use at home.

This includes learning about your medicines and finding out when you can get back to your regular activities. Research shows that at discharge time, doctors think their patients understand more than they really do about what they should or should not do when they return home.

Surgery

13. If you are having surgery, make sure that you, your doctor, and your surgeon all agree and are clear on exactly what will be done.

Doing surgery at the wrong site (for example, operating on the left knee instead of the right) is rare. But even once is too often. The good news is that wrong-site surgery is 100 percent preventable. The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons urges its members to sign their initials directly on the site to be operated on before the surgery.

Other Steps You Can Take

14. Speak up if you have questions or concerns.

You have a right to question anyone who is involved with your care.

15. Make sure that someone, such as your personal doctor, is in charge of your care.

This is especially important if you have many health problems or are in a hospital.

16. Make sure that all health professionals involved in your care have important health information about you.

Do not assume that everyone knows everything they need to.

17. Ask a family member or friend to be there with you and to be your advocate (someone who can help get things done and speak up for you if you can't).

Even if you think you don't need help now, you might need it later.

18. Know that "more" is not always better.

It is a good idea to find out why a test or treatment is needed and how it can help you. You could be better off without it.

19. If you have a test, don't assume that no news is good news.

Ask about the results.

20. Learn about your condition and treatments by asking your doctor and nurse and by using other reliable sources.

Patient Education – Sheet #4

Medical errors are mistakes that can happen with your healthcare. Medical errors can hurt or even kill people.

The Government, hospitals, doctors, and others are working hard to prevent medical errors. The tips here show what you can do to help keep you and your family safe. These tips are based on studies by many medical researchers.

What Are Medical Errors?

Medical errors are mistakes that can happen with medicine, surgery, tests, and other parts of your healthcare. Here is an example of a medical error:

Getting the wrong medicine is a medical error.



What Can You Do?

You can help protect yourself and your family from medical errors. The most important way you can do this is to talk. Talk to your doctor, nurse, and other health care workers.

- Tell them important things about your health.
- Ask them questions.
- Make decisions about your healthcare with them.



Patient Education Sheet #5

The following are provided by the National Council on Patient Information and Education, accessed at <http://www.talkaboutrx.org/golodnermessage.html#howtotalkaboutrx>

You may ask, "How and when do I Talk about Prescriptions?"

Before You Leave the Doctor's Office, if You are Given a New Prescription, Ask:

1. What is the name of the medicine and what is it supposed to do? Is this the brand or generic name? (Is a generic version available?)
2. How and when do I take the medicine - and for how long?
3. What foods, drinks, other medicines, dietary supplements, or activities should I avoid while taking this medicine?
4. What are the possible side effects, and what do I do if they occur?
5. When should I expect the medicine to begin to work, and how will I know if it is working?
6. Will this new prescription work safely with the other prescription and non-prescription medicines I am taking?

At the Pharmacy, or Wherever You Obtain Your Medicines, Ask:

1. Do you have a patient profile form for me to fill out? (If not, then create your own by clicking on [Medication List](#). Print this out, complete the form and show it to your pharmacist before your prescription is filled.) Will it include space for my non-prescription drugs and any dietary supplements?

2. Is there written information about my medicine? Ask the pharmacist to review the most important information with you. (Ask if it's available in large print or, if necessary, in a language other than English.)

3. What is the most important thing I should know about this medicine? Ask the pharmacist any questions that may not have been answered by your doctor.

4. Will any tests or monitoring be required while I am taking this medicine?

5. Can I get a refill? If so, when?

6. How should I store this medicine?

If you have questions about specific medicines, please visit the National Library of Medicine's website ([click here](#)) and click on "[Drug Information](#)".

In almost all states in the U.S., by law the pharmacy must ask if you would like to be counseled about your medicine. It is important to get your questions answered, so that you can use your medicines safely. Your pharmacist is part of your "medicine education team," too!

Who is the best person to "Talk About Prescriptions?" Whichever health care professional(s) you feel most comfortable with, who listens to your questions and concerns. [You can Talk About Prescriptions with your doctor, nurse, physician assistant, nurse practitioner, and/or your pharmacist.](#)

Using your medicines safely requires a team effort. Remember your role on the Medicine Education Team!

Patient Education Sheet #6

MEDICATION QUESTION GUIDE

This document was prepared by the US Food and Drug Administration, Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, accessed at

http://www.fda.gov/cder/consumerinfo/question_guide.htm

Ask your health care provider these questions about each new medicine which is recommended or prescribed. Write the answers in the spaces provided.

Use a separate sheet for each medicine.

Name of Medicine _____

- What are the brand and generic names of the medicine? Can I use a generic form?
- What is the medicine for and what effect should I expect?
- Does this drug replace any other medicine I have been using?
- How and when will I use it, what amount will I use, and for how long?
- What do I do if I miss a dose?
- Should I avoid any other medicines, (prescription or over-the-counter), dietary supplements, drinks, foods or activities while using this drug?
- When should I notice a difference or improvement? When should I report back.
- Will I need to have any testing to monitor this drug's effects?
- Can this medicine be used safely with all my other medications and therapies? Could there be interactions?

- What are the possible side effects? What do I do if a side effect occurs?
- How and where do I store this medicine?
- Where and how can I get written information about this medicine? What other sources of information can I use to learn about this medicine?

Call 1-888-INFO-FDA or go to http://www.fda.gov/cder/consumerinfo/active_member.htm