**Choosing the Right Pharmacy**

When getting your medications, it’s important to pick the right pharmacy. Here are some things to think about when choosing a pharmacy:

* Find a pharmacy (drugstore) where you can get ALL of your medications (if possible)
  + Getting medications at one place helps your pharmacist know all of the medications you are on. Your pharmacist can also tell if the medications might cause side effects or bad reactions with other medications.
  + Getting all medications at one place helps the pharmacist to make sure you are taking only the drugs you need to take.
* Make sure to take a list of all drugs with you and share with the pharmacist in the drugstores you go to. This includes all medications from doctors and over-the-counter medicines or vitamins such as aspirin, Tylenol, fish oil, Vitamin E, and herbal supplements.
  + Try to include how many times a day (ex. 1 time/day) you take the medicine and how much of it you take (ex. 10 mg or 2 pills).
* If you are allergic to any medications, make sure to share this with your pharmacist.
* Go to a pharmacy where you trust the pharmacist and think you can get your medication questions answered.

**Medication Costs**

To keep medication costs down, the following tips can help:

* Prices may be cheaper at your local neighborhood pharmacy than large chain pharmacies (ex. Eckerd, CVS, Walgreens, Wal-Mart). Warehouse club pharmacies (ex. Costco, Sam’s Club) are another alternative to consider. However, the prices at different drugstores may vary widely; it may be worthwhile to check prices of all of your medications. Call to check for prices of your medications.
* If you take medications every day or for a long period of time, you might be able to order more than a 30-day supply. Ask your pharmacist if you can order a 90-day supply.
* Remember to take your medication list with you to your doctor – ask if you need all brand name medicines or if you can take a cheaper medicine.
* Ask your doctor or pharmacist if any of your medicines can be prescribed as one-half of a double dose tablet in order to save money by pill splitting. This cannot be done with capsules.
* Call your insurance company and find out the list of drugs (formulary) they will pay for and bring this to your doctor.
* Find out if there are any patient assistance programs that can help you get drugs at a discount. See below for more information:
  + For information about patient assistance and SHIP (State Health Insurance Assistance Program) go to [www.needymeds.org](http://www.needymeds.org)
  + For reduced-cost medications or coupons, search by medication or pharmaceutical company
  + For free or discounted medications from pharmaceutical companies for patients without insurance, go to [www.pparx.org](http://www.pparx.org)
  + For discounted medications and diabetic treatment supplies to low income individuals, go to [www.rxoutreach.org](http://www.rxoutreach.org)
  + For lists of services to assist with the cost of medications, find housing and elder care, and get food stamps, go to [www.benefitscheckup.org](http://www.benefitscheckup.org)

**Medication Resources for Medicare Patients**

* For assistance with understanding and choosing from Medicare Part D plans offered within your state and formulary information for each plan, go to [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).
* For eligibility and contact information on state help with drug payment, go to <https://www.medicare.gov/pharmaceutical-assistance-program/state-programs.aspx> and Independent non-profit consumer advocacy group [www.medicarerights.org](http://www.medicarerights.org)
* The Social Security Extra Help Program assists patients with medication costs; go to [www.ssa.gov/prescriptionhelp](http://www.ssa.gov/prescriptionhelp).
* State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) can drastically reduce co-pays for Medicare patients who qualify. Go to this website to get directions on how to apply for the Extra Help program: <http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/10525.html>.
* For one-on-one counseling for patients and families to assist with their Medicare options, go to [www.shiptalk.org](http://www.shiptalk.org).

**Additional Information**

For questions and answers about generic drugs:

* <http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/QuestionsAnswers/ucm100100.htm>

For information about getting prescriptions through the internet:

* <http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm048396.htm>

For information about the risks of foreign and Internet pharmacies:

* <http://www.fda.gov/drugs/resourcesforyou/consumers/buyingusingmedicinesafely/buyingmedicinefromoutsidetheunitedstates/default.htm>