## 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 (Eckerd, CVS, Walgreens, Wal-Mart).   Call to check for prices of your medication.
- 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 medicines or if you can take a cheaper medicine.
- 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  or http://www.needymeds.org/indices/ship.htmIndependent non-profit
- 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
- For discounted medications and diabetic treatment supplies to low income individuals go to http://rxassist.org/search/default.cfm - www.rxoutreach.org
- For lists of services to assist with cost of medications, find housing and elder care, and get food stamps go to www.benefitscheckup.org

**Medication Resources for Medicare Patients**
- For assistance for patients with understanding and choosing from Medicare Part D plans offered within their state and formulary information for each plan go to 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 : Independent non-profit consumer advocacy group www.medicarerights.org
- Social Security Extra Help Program; Assists patients with medication costs go to 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: http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/10525.html: How to apply to the Extra Help program.
- One-on-one counseling for patient and families to assist with their Medicare options go to 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