

SeniorCircle plus

NEWS AND HEALTH INFORMATION FOR SENIORS

SPRING 2006

Beware of Medication Interactions

How can you be sure the medications you take are safe and effective? Start by taking them properly

Taking multiple medications is not necessarily harmful, and many drugs are prescribed together purposely for an added effect. But some prescription drugs can interact with each other, or with over-the-counter (OTC) drugs, such as acetaminophen, aspirin and cold medicine. These interactions can cause unintended and even dangerous side effects.

Common drug interaction symptoms include confusion, depression and fatigue. Because older adults often take more medications than younger adults, the incidence of adverse medication interactions does increase with age. That's why it's so important to follow a doctor's instructions carefully to obtain the maximum benefit with the least risk.

Write It Down

To reduce your risk of drug interactions as much as possible, keep a personal list of all medications—including over-the-counter medicines,

vitamins and herbal supplements—and take it with you to each doctor's visit. Include information about your medical conditions, such as allergies or chronic conditions. By having this information on one piece of paper, you'll be able to tell your doctor everything that's important about your health.

Play It Safe

Let Marymount Hospital help you keep track of your medication with a free medication guide and wallet-size medication card to carry with you to each doctor's visit. Call **216/587-8093** to receive yours. You'll also be pleased to know that you can now obtain your medicines and other health care items at the new Marymount Family Pharmacy, located in the old Medic pharmacy suite in the Medical Office Building at 12000 McCracken Road, Ste. 151, in Garfield Heights (use entrance 3). The Marymount Family Pharmacy accepts most private insurance as well as most Medicare D plans. If you need to find a doctor, call the Marymount Physician Referral Line at **216/581-WELL**. ●



SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

The former Medic pharmacy has re-opened as Marymount Family Pharmacy.

Pharmacy Hours:

Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.- 6 p.m.

Sat. 9 a.m.- 2 p.m.

Closed Sundays

216/587-8822

10% senior discounts on all over-the-counter medicines and health supplies.

Private insurance and most Medicare D plans accepted.



Find a physician or support group, view our events calendar, take a health quiz or read about our expansion at www.marymount.org.

The Season for Sneezin’

How to tell the difference between a cold and allergies

Ah, springtime. The sun is shining, the birds are chirping and “achoo!”—you’re stuck in bed and can’t enjoy any of it. But are your sneezes and sniffles caused by the blooming flora or the common cold? Learn the difference—and the different treatments—for yourself.

In instance, allergy symptoms begin almost immediately following exposure to an allergen. But cold symptoms may take a few days to appear after exposure to the virus. And while a cold can last several days to two weeks, allergies last as long as you are exposed to the allergen—even

symptoms can lead to more serious conditions, including sinusitis and ear infections, according to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America.

Neither seasonal allergies nor common colds have a cure, but their symptoms can be treated. Relieve your cold by:

- resting in bed
- drinking plenty of fluids
- taking over-the-counter cold medicines, including decongestants and cough suppressants
- taking aspirin for headache or fever
- gargling salt water, if sore throat is present.

Antibiotics should not be used to treat the common cold—they do not kill viruses and may even make your situation worse.



Scrutinize Your Symptoms

While colds and allergies share some symptoms—sneezing and a runny and stuffy nose—other symptoms help distinguish one from the other. Cold symptoms can include a sore throat and general aches and pains. But allergies may cause wheezing and itchy, watery eyes.

Get a Definitive Diagnosis

In addition to analyzing your symptoms, there are other ways to determine what ails you. For

several weeks or months. If there’s still doubt as to what’s making you suffer, see your doctor.

Take Action with Treatment

Once you know what you’re up against, it’s important to treat your symptoms properly. Besides being inconvenient, untreated allergy

Prevention is the Best Medicine

Here’s how you can head off allergies and colds at the pass:

Colds:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and hot water.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Disinfect commonly used surfaces.
- Use paper towels instead of cloth.

Allergies:

- During warm months, keep your windows closed and air conditioning on.
- Use a quality air filter to keep out pollen.
- Bathe indoor pets regularly.
- Wash your hair every day.
- Wash your clothes in hot water.

Alleviate your allergy symptoms by taking over-the-counter or prescription antihistamines and decongestants and by using nasal steroids. Always talk to your doctor before using a medication or a combination of medications for the first time. ●

Source: National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases

A Stroke of Prevention

It's not too late to protect yourself

Nearly 700,000 Americans suffer strokes each year. Don't become one of them by ignoring the risk factors. Protect yourself with this advice from the American Stroke Association:

Control your blood pressure. Talk to your doctor about what your numbers should be and have your blood pressure checked regularly. Eat a healthy diet and take blood pressure-lowering medication, if necessary.

Quit smoking. Cigarette smoke reduces the amount of oxygen in your blood and causes damage to your arteries. Quitting can slow

and even reverse the harmful effects—no matter how long you've smoked.

Manage your diabetes. Diabetes puts you at greater risk for stroke. Be physically active every day and control your blood glucose levels.

Lower high cholesterol. High cholesterol increases the likelihood of developing heart disease, and heart disease is a risk factor for stroke. Talk to your doctor about lowering your cholesterol count.

The Cleveland Clinic and Lakewood and Marymount hospitals are certified by the Joint

Don't Delay If you experience sudden symptoms such as numbness—especially on one side of the body—confusion or difficulty speaking, dizziness or loss of balance, difficulty seeing or a severe headache, you may be having a stroke. Call 9-1-1 immediately.

Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations as Primary Stroke Centers. This means the hospitals have met strict national stroke care standards. Several other Cleveland Clinic hospitals are applying for certification. ●

You're Not Alone

Don't brave your diabetes by yourself. Seek support

Upon receiving a diagnosis of diabetes, you may feel overwhelmed and isolated. And while diabetes is a chronic condition, that doesn't mean it's not manageable.

The first thing you should do is educate yourself about the disease. Ask your doctor about enrolling in a diabetes education program. In addition to learning about the disease and how best to treat it, you'll discover how to keep your diabetes under control through a healthy diet and proper exercise and how to monitor your condition and recognize complications.

Besides arming yourself with knowledge, it's a good idea to surround yourself with support.

While your family and friends may empathize, they'll never know exactly what you are going through. That's why it's important to participate in a diabetes support group. Beyond gaining emotional support, you'll learn tips and coping techniques from others who share your condition, and you'll offer others help, too. Diabetes support groups



have even been found to help reduce stress, according to the American Diabetes Association.

To find a support group in your area, call **800/342-2383**. The Cleveland Clinic Health System and several of its hospitals offer diabetes management and education programs. Call your local Cleveland Clinic hospital for details. ●

Breast Health

Important for women of all ages

Every two minutes, a woman in the United States is diagnosed with breast cancer, and it is the leading cancer for both Caucasian and African-American women. Even more remarkable is the fact that one in seven American women will develop breast cancer at some point in her lifetime.

Genetics, family history, diet, exercise and many other factors determine your risk for breast cancer. Mammography, in combination with monthly breast self-exams and regular clinical breast exams by your physician, is the best way to detect breast cancer early on and help save lives. The Breast Care Center at Marymount Hospital offers quality care and support services for the screening, diagnosis and treatment of all medical and cosmetic breast problems. Services include:

- Diagnostic and screening mammography
- Mammotome stereotactic biopsy



- Reconstruction
 - Augmentation and reduction surgery
 - Cancer surgery
 - Adjuvant treatment referral
 - Individual and group consultation and education
- For more information, call the Breast Care Center at **216/587-8135**. •

Find a Physician

If you need a referral to a Marymount physician who can assist you in obtaining breast health services, please contact our Physician Referral Line at **216/581-WELL (9355)** or find a physician by specialty at **www.marymount.org** in our “Find a Doctor” section.

Senior Circle Plus is changing to serve you better. Look for our new name, logo, newsletter format and expanded services in our next issue!

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