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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PREVENTING MEDICATION ERRORS

The potential for medication errors is an inherent part of any health care system, but health-system pharmacists play an important role in developing and implementing processes and procedures to prevent medication errors from occurring. To ensure medications are used safely and effectively, the **Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin** recommends that patients follow these tips:

- Keep a personal list of all drug therapy, including prescribed drugs, nonprescription drugs, home remedies, and medical foods that you take and show it to the health professional(s) managing your care.
- Maintain a list of medications that you cannot take (for reasons like allergic reactions). Give the reasons why, and show it to the health professional(s) managing your care.
- Communicate your actual self-medication practices to direct health care providers, especially if how you take your medication has become different from the originally prescribed directions.
- Ask your pharmacist if you have any questions about the treatments or medications you receive.
- Visit only one pharmacy for all your prescription and non-prescription drug needs. The pharmacist will then have a complete record of your medication history and can screen for potentially dangerous drug-drug interactions.
- Learn the names of the drug products that are prescribed and administered to you, as well as their dosage strength and schedules.
- Ask if you should avoid certain foods, beverages, other medicines or activities while you are taking the drug.
- Request any written information available on the drug product.
- Question anything you don't understand or that doesn't seem right. Be especially alert to unexpected changes, such as receiving a prescription refill that seems to have a different strength or appearance from your original prescription.
- Verify your understanding of proper medication use and effects by repeating medication information to health professionals.
- If you're too ill to follow these suggestions, ask a friend or relative to help.