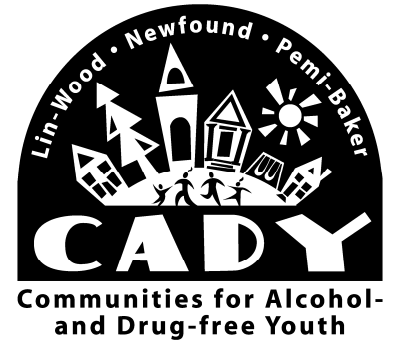


# Prescription Drug Safety for Seniors...

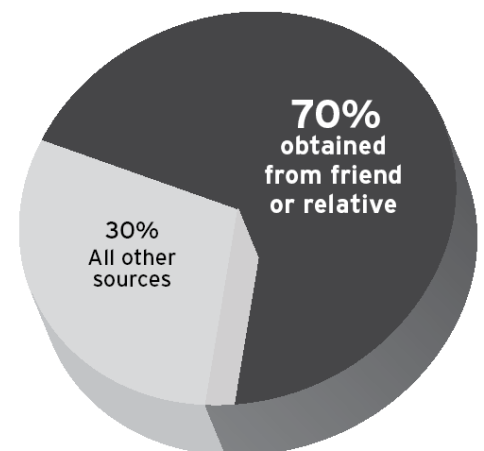


Medication is more than just the drugs your doctor prescribes. It includes over-the-counter (OTC) products, vitamins and minerals, herbal and natural health products.

- Keep an up-to-date record of your prescription medication and nonprescription products, allergies, illnesses, and other health information.
- Bring current prescription medications at least once a year to your primary care doctor's office and have them reviewed to verify that each medication is still useful and appropriate, and to ensure that the combination of medications is safe.
- Store medication in a cool dry place, away from direct sunlight unless otherwise directed. Most people keep medications in the bathroom medicine cabinet, where they can get damp and lose potency. A dry place such as a kitchen cabinet or bedroom is a better storage location **as long as the medications are out of reach of children, not readily visible to strangers, and safely locked away.**
- When visiting a home with young children, make sure medications in purses, bathroom kits, and suitcases are not available to children. If young children visit your home, remember to keep medication and household chemicals locked or out of children's reach. Avoid taking medication in front of very young children, as they like to imitate.
- Be careful of weekly pill minders, they help to organize medication but most are not child resistant. If you wish to use a pill organizer, please ask your pharmacist for advice.
- DO NOT leave medications in an unlocked vehicle or lying around in unsupervised shopping bags or purses.
- If you have difficulty opening the safety cap of your medication bottle, ask your pharmacist for an easy off or flip top lid. If you have these types of bottles, it is even MORE important to keep them away from children!!
- Medication must never be shared. What helps you may seriously hurt someone else.
- Do not transfer or mix medication into other containers. For example, don't mix different medications in the same bottle to save space or for traveling. Check medications several times a year to make sure they have not expired. If you don't know if a medication is still good, check with your pharmacist. Don't hold on to medications you don't need!
- Do not put medication down the toilet or sink. Check with your pharmacy to see if they have a medication disposal program. If you must dispose of medications, mix them with coffee grounds, cat litter or other such "waste" materials to render them unusable, and throw them away. Never throw old medicines away in their original containers.

## ***Are you a hazard to your grandchildren?***

A study conducted by the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission states that 36 percent of childhood ingestion accidents related to prescriptions involve a grandparent's medication. Prescriptions for older adults are some of the most toxic medications, posing the greatest threat of a tragic outcome if ingested by a child. Even the most loving grandparents can put their grandchildren in danger when they unknowingly overlook simple precautions. It is more important than ever that grandparents be familiar with poison prevention procedures.



Source: SAMHSA, 2006 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (September 2007)