

# *Taking Your Medicines Safely & Poison Prevention*



# Who Are We?

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## □ Utah Poison Control Center Mission

***To prevent and minimize adverse effects from a poison exposure through education, service, and research.***

## □ UPCC Staff

- Registered Nurses
- Pharmacists
- Medical Doctors
- Health Educators



# Why Are We Here?

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- With older adults and medicines —
  - 83% take at least 1 prescription drug
  - 50% take 3 or more medications
- To combat potential poisoning from prescriptions and other remedies
- Provide tips for managing your health remedies
- Prevent poisonings



# Definitions

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- Health Remedies
  - Prescriptions
  - Over-the-Counter
  - Herbals
  - Vitamins
  - Supplements
  - Certain foods and juices



# Sources of Information

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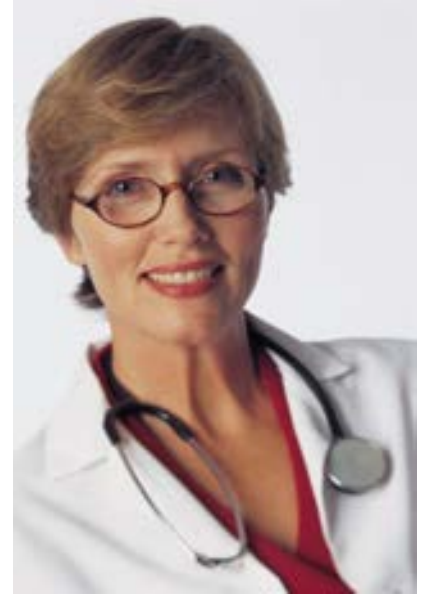
- Doctor
- Nurse
- Pharmacist
- Poison Control Center
- Ads (TV and magazines)
- Friends and family
- Internet



# Finding Good Sources on the Internet

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- Government, educational, or non-profit websites
- Up-to-date information





# Poisoning Exposures

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- ❑ Not just a problem in children



# Example Interactions

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## ❑ Interaction

- Combined action of 2 or more things
- Could create an unwanted effect or poisoning





# Story #1

- ❑ Joe has been taking a blood thinner for the past year
- ❑ He's concerned about his family history of heart disease
- ❑ Adds a daily aspirin



# Story #2

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- Ellen regularly rides her bike
- Drinks grapefruit juice every morning for Vitamin C
- Doctor prescribes cholesterol-lowering medicine



# Story #3

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- ❑ Sara has a very full, active retirement
- ❑ Takes an OTC pain reliever daily for minor aches and pains
- ❑ Develops a miserable cold, so she takes a multi-symptom cold medicine



# 6 Key Questions

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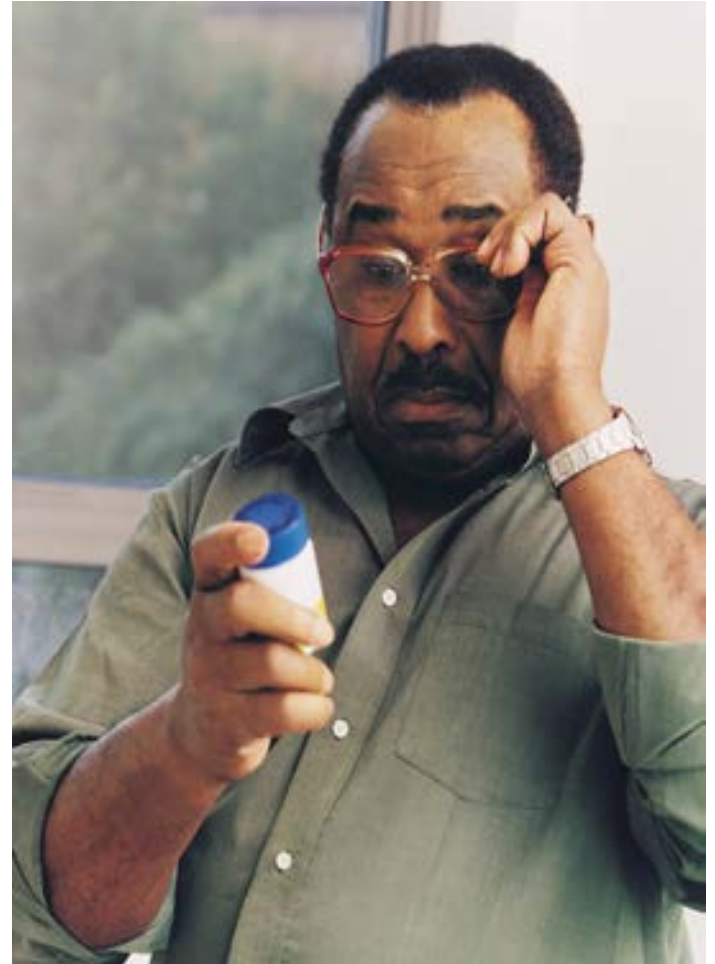
- ❑ What is the name of my medicine?
- ❑ What is the medicine for?
- ❑ What side effects could I have?
- ❑ How much and how often do I take this?
- ❑ What should I do if I miss a dose or double the dose?
- ❑ While taking this medicine, what should I avoid?



# Patient Information Sheet

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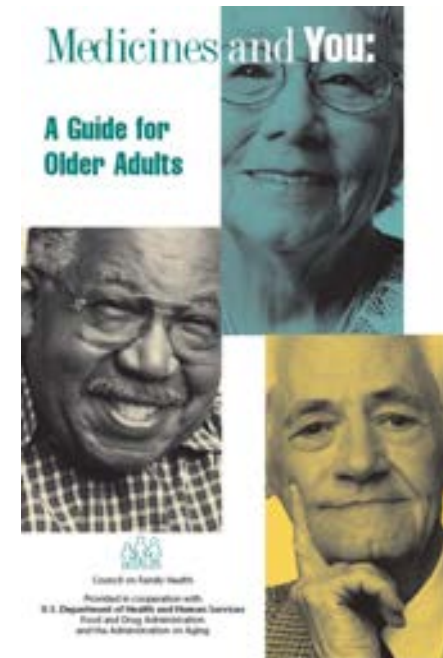
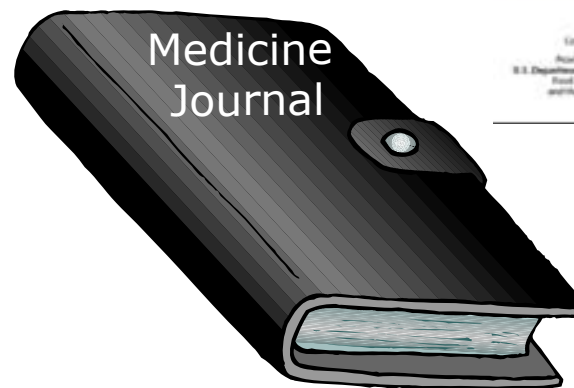
- ❑ Most new prescriptions come with this sheet
- ❑ Some pharmacies provide large print and other languages
- ❑ Ask for an explanation!





# Medicine Management Tools

- ❑ Medicine tracking tools
  - Journal
  - Pill reminder box
  - Medicine brochure



*Fill ALL prescriptions at the same pharmacy*

# Pill Reminders

## Can They Help?

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- Easy to open
  - Load, lock, use
- Locking system
  - Prevents spills
  - Difficult for youngsters to open
- Convenient for home or travel
  - Good reminder at home or away



# Medicine Journal or Diary

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- Keep track of...
  - Questions or problems related to your medicine
  - Blood pressure & blood sugar
- Take with you
  - Doctor's visit
  - Pharmacy trips



# Household Poison Prevention

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- ❑ Protect yourself
- ❑ Protect your loved ones

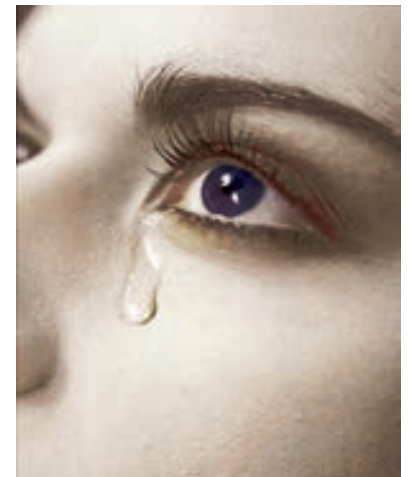


# What is a Poison?

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Anything someone **eats**, **breathes**, gets in the **eyes** or on the **skin**, that can hurt or even cause death if it gets into or on the body.





# Unintentional Poisoning

- Poisonings can occur in many ways
  - Medication errors
  - Children getting into cupboards or purses
  - Mixing household chemicals
  - Improper storage of chemicals



# Keep Loved Ones Safe

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- Between 10 and 20 percent of unintentional poisonings among children involve a grandparent's medication
- Most of these poisonings occurred when medications were left on a table, countertop, low shelf or in a purse/pocketbook

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# Prevention

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- ❑ Household chemicals and medications should be kept up high and locked up
- ❑ Do not mix cleaning products
- ❑ Store household chemicals in the original container
- ❑ Handle household chemicals with caution



# When to Call the Poison Center

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□ Call **1-800-222-1222** if someone:

- Takes wrong medicine
- Takes too much medicine
- Breathes in poison
- Gets poison in eye
- Eats or drinks something that is not food
- Spills poison on skin



# If a Poisoning Occurs

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- Remain Calm
- Have the product ready
- Call the Poison Control Center **1-800-222-1222**



***All services are  
free and  
confidential***



# *Thank You*

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Content Credit: American Association of Poison Control Centers

Photo Credit: Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation