

QUESTIONS FOR THE DOCTOR OR PHARMACIST:

What is the name of the medicine?

What is it supposed to do?

Are there any side effects?

What should I do if they occur?

How should this medicine be taken?

What should I do if the person I'm caring for misses a dose?

Are there any beverages, foods or other medicines that should be avoided while taking this medicine?

How should this medicine be stored? Does it need to be refrigerated?

BENJAMIN ROSE INSTITUTE

For nearly a century, BRI has worked to raise the standards of care for older adults.

Founded in 1908 as a nonsectarian organization through the generosity of Cleveland industrialist Benjamin Rose, the Institute has been an innovator in service delivery, a leader in research, and an advocate for the elderly in Northeast Ohio and nationally. Supported by an endowment fund, grants, fees for services, and gifts, BRI assists older people and their families through collaborative efforts and through its:

- Eldercare Services Institute
- Margaret Blenkner Research Institute
- Katz Policy Institute
- Margaret Wagner Apartments

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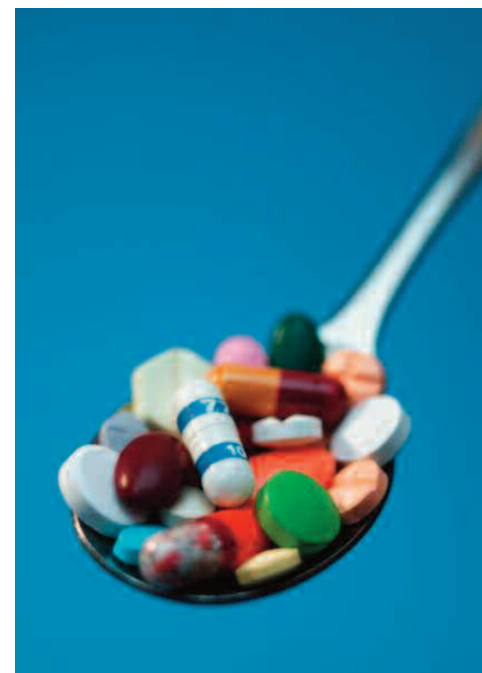
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Administration
11900 Fairhill Road, Suite 300
Cleveland, Ohio 44120

MEDICATIONS

INFORMATION YOU CAN USE
FROM THE BENJAMIN ROSE INSTITUTE



WHY DOES MOM NEED SO MANY PILLS?

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Of the 1.7 billion prescriptions written each year, more than a third are for older adults. Different medicines work in different ways. Medicines can cure illness, relieve symptoms, help the body work better, slow the progress of a disease or prevent illness. Sometimes you can tell right away that a medicine is helping. Other times



improvement is more gradual. For instance, an infection can feel better after a day or two of antibiotics. On the other hand, it may take several months of taking a medication to see an improvement in blood cholesterol levels.

Always be sure that prescription medications are taken for as long as the doctor recommends – even if your relative feels better or doesn't notice any improvement right away.

IF SOMEONE YOU CARE FOR IS 65 OR OLDER, YOU PROBABLY MANAGE FROM TWO TO SEVEN OR MORE MEDICATIONS EVERY DAY. YOU MAY FEEL LIKE YOUR WHOLE DAY REVOLVES AROUND MEDICATION PLANNING FOR YOUR RELATIVE.

Some diseases like glaucoma and high blood pressure have few symptoms but medications keep these diseases from getting worse. Be sure your relative keeps taking the medicine even if symptoms improve.

TEAMWORK

A medication regimen can be most effective when you, your loved one, the doctor and pharmacist all work together as a team. Be sure to alert the doctor or pharmacist if the person for whom you are caring has any of the following difficulties:

- **Trouble remembering** to take medications
- **Difficulty reading** labels
- **Hearing problems** that make it difficult to understand verbal instructions
- **Trouble opening bottles**, breaking pills or handling medication apparatus such as an injection needle or eye dropper
- **Difficulty swallowing** pills or capsules
- **Trouble scheduling** different medicines throughout the day

There may be simple solutions to these issues, such as the use of a “days-of-the-week” pillbox as a daily reminder, installation of a “medication dispenser” that uses a verbal reminder, or receiving medicine in liquid rather than pill form to help with swallowing.

If new symptoms develop while your relative is taking a medication, contact the doctor immediately.

A new symptom could be a side effect of the medicine. Excessive drowsiness, confusion, insomnia, loss of appetite, incontinence and other symptoms often blamed on “getting old” may actually be the result of negative interaction among multiple medications or other medication-related problem.

