



Could your medications be causing problems?



Because your body changes as you age, some drugs may begin to cause more side effects, even though you may have been taking them without any problems for years. So, to stay healthy, you need to talk to your doctor about the drugs you are taking and how you are feeling.

medications, it is important to talk to your doctor regularly about your health and your medications. To help you communicate better with your doctor, a patient worksheet is now available through IPRO, the Medicare-designated Quality Improvement Organization for New York State. The worksheet asks you about the medicines you take and how you feel. Bringing the form to your next office visit may help your doctor tailor your drug regimen just for you.

Symptoms that you think may be due to normal aging may actually be due to prescription and over the counter medications. Some drugs may worsen memory, cause confusion or falls, or may cause constipation, urinary retention, and dry mouth.

Because these symptoms may or may not be caused by your

For free copies of the form, please call Member Services at **1-800-826-6240** or the IPRO website at:
<http://consumers.ipro.org/index/pres-drug-patients>.



Your doctor is in the best position to guide your care. Do not change your medications without your doctor's instructions.



Medication Therapy Management Program (MTMP)

Some members may have recently received a call from a Case Manager at NHP asking them about their medications. The purpose of the call was to discuss the MTMP, the goal of the program and how it could help you manage your medications more effectively. An NHP Case Manager can provide valuable information and education about your medical conditions and the importance of taking medications as your doctor prescribed.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT TAKING YOUR MEDICATIONS

- Names of your medications, both prescription and nonprescription. Because you may see more than one doctor, you should always tell each doctor of all the medications you are taking. This will help make sure that the medication you take-prescription or non-prescription-is right for your condition.
- Keeping track of different medicines (often a problem when many medicines are prescribed, or when they have to be taken at different times).
- Even if you take only a few drugs, complications can arise if you have no sure way to remember whether or not you have taken a medicine. Check-off charts can be designed that are simple to use, especially if you take only one or two medicines. However, you must always remember to check off the space on the chart when you do take the drug.

If you take several medicines and you have trouble keeping track of what drugs to take, when, and under what specific directions, Member Services can provide you with a chart to help. Please call us at 1-800-826-6240.



What you should know about prescription drugs and generics



Many people buy things based on a company's brand name. Because of experiences with generic versions of products such as tissues or laundry detergent, many people believe that a generic drug is a lower-quality product than a brand-name drug. This is not true.

Generic drugs are therapeutically equivalent to brand-name drugs. Before a generic drug can be sold, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) makes sure the drug is just as effective as its brand name version. In order to ensure its safety and effectiveness, the FDA requires a generic drug undergo intense testing to make sure it acts the same way in the body.

So what is the difference between a generic and a brand name drug? When a brand name drug's patent expires, other pharmaceutical companies can produce the same active chemical compound and sell the drug under its generic name. As such, generic drugs contain the same active ingredients. The real difference is the price. Generally, generic drugs are less expensive and cost about half as much on average as compared to their brand name counterparts.

In short, the word generic does not mean lower quality. With your doctor's approval, generic drugs can be safely and effectively substituted for brand name drugs. If you have questions about brand name vs. generic drugs, your doctor can help you decide which may be best for you.