

# SENIOR CITIZENS

## TAKING YOUR MEDICINES SAFELY

This program provides training to anyone interested in educating older adults about medication safety and the toll-free Poison Help line (1-800-222-1222). Ideal settings for this program include senior centers, community recreation centers, libraries or churches. The National Council on Aging has an archived webinar about implementing the Taking Your Medicines Safely (TYMS) program in your community.

If you choose to teach a program, the TYMS materials include the leader's guide, participant guide, promotional flyer and a medicine safety review quiz. These materials can be obtained on HRSA's Poison Help website.

Brochures, Poison Help magnets and other materials can be ordered from the Missouri Poison Center.

The TYMS program was developed by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) in partnership with the Administration on Aging and the Public Education Committee of the American Association of Poison Control Centers.

If you are not interested in delivering a program for older adults and simply want to get more information about medication safety, below are some general tips.

## **SAFE MEDICINE USE AND POISON PREVENTION TIPS A GUIDE FOR OLDER ADULTS AND CAREGIVERS**

### **KNOW YOUR MEDICINES**

1. Keep a current medicine list. Know the names and why you are using each medicine. This includes all prescription medicines, over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.
2. Do not share your medicine.
3. Use only medicine that is prescribed for you. Check the label before using it to make sure it is for you.
4. Review all your medicines with your doctor or pharmacist. Do this at least once a year, or when you start using a new medicine.
5. Know how and when to use your medicine, how much to use, and for how long. Never use more medicine than prescribed. Using more does not mean you will get better faster. Also, using too much medicine can poison you.

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## **SAFE MEDICINE USE AND POISON PREVENTION TIPS A GUIDE FOR OLDER ADULTS AND CAREGIVERS**

**KEEP ALL MEDICINES LOCKED UP AND OUT OF CHILDREN'S REACH  
ESPECIALLY IF GRANDCHILDREN OR OTHER CHILDREN ARE VISITING.**

1. No container can promise to be child proof.
2. Store your medicines in a safe place so that children cannot get to them.  
This will prevent accidental poisonings.
3. Before taking any medication. Turn on the lights. Get your glasses. Read the label.
4. Call the Poison Help number (1-800-222-1222) if you think:  
*A medicine was not taken as directed.*  
*Too much medicine was taken.*

### **TIPS FOR CAREGIVERS**

Here are some things that you can do to help older adults use medicine safely:

1. Keep a current medicine list. This includes prescription medicines, OTC medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.
2. Plan ahead to refill prescriptions on time. Get prescriptions refilled early to avoid running out of medicine. Make sure the right medicine is being used at the right time, in the right amount, and the way it is prescribed.
3. Prevent bad interactions between medicines. Tell health care professionals about all medicines the older adult is using. The information is important to share before a new medicine is prescribed.

Education is key to prevention. The Missouri Poison Center welcomes teachers, child care providers, scout leaders, EMS providers and other community educators to use these free resources to teach about poison safety.



**BE POISON SMART!** KEEP POISONOUS PRODUCTS  
OUT OF SIGHT & OUT OF REACH.

**[WWW.MISSOURIPOISONCENTER.ORG](http://WWW.MISSOURIPOISONCENTER.ORG)**

