



Caregiver Tip of the Month – July 2011

Notes from Area Agency on Aging of North Idaho

Medication Management for the Elderly

The ability of the elderly to manage their medications is often a concern for their loved ones. Thirty five percent (35%) of hospital admissions of the elderly are related to either medication non-compliance, under-medicating, or over medicating. 125,000 elderly die each year due to medication mismanagement. By age 65, two thirds of all seniors have two or more chronic conditions requiring prescription medication.

Family involvement is imperative if there is any possibility that your elder is forgetful or confused. There are many ways to individualize the medication regimen for your elder. You'll know in which area of the process they need assistance. However, it's important to allow them their dignity in choosing where they need help.

Some ways to provide assistance are: easy-open bottles from the pharmacy, large print labels, a short code on the bottle for what it is used for, different colored medication bottles for different medications, use of a pill organizer or a "bubble pack" dispenser, use of a chart/documentation check sheet, daily phone reminders, attendance with the elder at all doctors' appointments and getting a medication "check up" at least once a year. All of the elder's medications, including supplements and herbal remedies, should be reviewed for drug interactions and need. Reviews should be performed with the elder's Doctor(s) and/or Pharmacist.

More information regarding this and other topics may be found at www.aaani.org, www.AskNurseAlice.com, www.cdc.gov/aging, www.mustforseniors.org