



## **I Don't Feel Right! Could it be my pills?**

By Lynn Harrelson, R. PH.

Have you ever asked, "Could the changes in how I feel be caused by the medications I'm taking?" A medication related problem is any in which we are not getting the results we expect from our therapy.

One important reason for increasing numbers of doctor appointments, emergency room or hospital visits, and nursing home admissions, is medication related problems. As we age, we encounter more conditions that require more medications. These can include prescriptions, over the counter pills, health foods and nutrition supplements.

**The pills add up, therapy gets complicated, and medication-related problems begin to occur and can escalate quickly.**

Caregivers and patients often fail to see the negative impact on health and well-being this can cause.

### ***What are some problems associated with medications?***

- Doses are too high  
Doses don't reach an effective blood level
- Meds don't produce the results for which they were prescribed
- Drug therapies are overlooked (not prescribed)
- Doctors are unaware of other meds being taken
- Prescription medication not being taken or even filled
- Adverse drug reactions
- Side effects

The more medications taken, the greater potential for medication related problems.

### ***So, back to our question: Is it my pills?***

Acting on that one question will make for better healthcare decisions. If problems remain unaddressed, other decisions can be compromised. For example, when you discuss the need to make the home safer, consider that if medications continue to cause dizziness and falls, the home remains

unsafe. When decisions are made to change diets or arrange meal delivery, consider that weight, strength and appetite may not improve if medications continue to contribute to changes in appetite or absorption of nutrients. **As you consider your efforts to remain healthy, active and independent, it is possible that medication related problems may cause just the opposite.**

All patients and caregivers are encouraged to understand that medications are an extremely important part of a health care plan. However, each medication used touches all aspects of a senior's day to day activities and quality of life. Many times medications cannot cure health problems, but treat conditions and slow the decline in health. Medications may be used differently to get better results and fewer side effects. **The proper use of all medications at an optimal dose is essential to achieve the best results and further slow the decline in health.** It is absolutely necessary that patients, family or caregivers learn about the unique group of medications that are being used and how to achieve maximum benefit from their use.

**“An optimal dose is essential to achieve the best results and slow the decline in health”**

**There are services available to address medication related problems, access the total therapies, and evaluate whether or not the patient is optimizing his or her medications. You are encouraged to seek the support and direction of a health care professional specially trained to provide help, support and direction with medication use. Choose a service that offers to develop a comprehensive plan for all your medications, and one who will work with your doctors to help you achieve greater benefits from your meds.**

**Pills are there to help us, not hurt us. An optimized drug therapy program will promote independence and continued well being. Make sure your medication regimen is achieving this goal.**

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