

Four things YOU can do to stay SAFE with your **MEDICATIONS**

A Guide for Patients in the Home

Did you know that problems with medications are one of the most frequent reasons patients end up in an emergency room or back in the hospital? Follow these four simple suggestions and you can avoid that result and help Advanced Home Care achieve our most important goal – to keep you safe!



1 Know Your Risk Level.

🏠 Medications, taken correctly, can help you get better. Taken incorrectly, they can cause problems. Some medication types are more risky than others. Four medication types cause more than two-thirds of emergency hospitalizations. They are:

- **Anticoagulant Drugs** (ex: Coumadin/Warfarin, Lovenox, Pradaxa, Arixtra)
- **Insulins** (ex: Novolin, Humulin, Novolog, Humalog, Lantus)
- **Anti-Platelet Drugs** (ex: Aspirin, Plavix, Ticlid, Pletal)
- **Oral Diabetic Medications** (ex: Glucotrol, Micronase, Amaryl, Prandin)

🏠 If you take one of these medications, it's especially important that you and your loved ones understand how to take it correctly, and what to watch for.

2 Know Your Side Effects.

🏠 Learn what the danger signs are for your medications and to be watchful for them. Let your nurse or doctor know immediately if you are experiencing dizziness, bleeding, signs of bleeding (such as bruising, bleeding gums, or dark stools), frequent urination, headaches, or other changes in the way you feel.



3 Ask Questions.

- 🏠 During your time with our Advanced Home Care, we are committed to providing you with the best medication education possible. But we need your help – it's very important that YOU ask us YOUR questions.
- 🏠 What do you need to ask us and know about your medications?
 - What is the purpose of each medication?
 - When should I take my medications?
 - How much of each medication should I be taking?
 - What are the side effects and warning signs I should watch for when I take my medications?
- 🏠 Always ask us about new or changed medications!
- 🏠 Don't forget your pharmacist. The pharmacy that supplied you with your medications will have a pharmacist happy and ready to answer your questions.

4 Take Your Medications As Ordered By Your Doctor.

- 🏠 One of the most common causes of medication errors is confusion over how the medication should be taken. It is very important that you:
 - Take only medications your doctor has ordered
 - Take the right amount of your medication each and every time
 - Take your medications at the right time
 - Don't take medications that your current doctors or nurses do not know about, even over the counter vitamins or supplements
- 🏠 Keep it simple! There are lots of tools you can use (weekly schedules, pillboxes, etc...) to help you keep your medication schedule simple and understandable. Ask your nurse to help you organize your medications in a way that makes it easy not to make a mistake.
- 🏠 Make sure your nurses and doctors know what medications you are taking and how you are taking them. Don't assume they know.