



## Fact Sheet

### Polypharmacy – Growing Drug Problem

Senior citizens with a drug problem? Recent studies show that nearly half of all senior adults take one or more medications that are not medically necessary. This ‘drug problem’ is called polypharmacy.

Sometimes medications are prescribed by different doctors who aren’t working together for the patient’s benefit. Sometimes doctors start medication for a patient, but don’t think to ever stop it. Other times patients are prescribed medication without good information or reason to do so. Sometimes patients are confused about how to take medication. Regardless of the reason, the outcome may be dangerous, leading to confusion, disorientation, low blood pressure, trouble breathing, falls, or dangerous drug interactions.

You can take steps to prevent polypharmacy – or unnecessary medication.

- Carry a list of all your medications with you and show them to the doctor at each visit.
- Ask your doctor at each visit whether any of the medications you are taking could be stopped.
- Work together with your doctor and your pharmacist to develop a safe medication plan.
- Ask your doctor to write down dosage information for any new medication so you can review it later.
- Watch for changes to your health after starting a new medication. If you notice physical changes, difficulty doing daily tasks, or health issues, let your doctor and your pharmacist know right away.
- Take a person you trust to doctor appointments with you.

Medicines are intended to help health issues, not create them. Protect yourself from having a ‘drug problem’.

Learn more by visiting [www.phelpscountyhealth.com](http://www.phelpscountyhealth.com), Facebook, Twitter, or by calling (573) 458-6010.

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