

## Eli's Rehab Report

### Clip and Save: Improve Home Health Medication Management with this Teaching Tool

**Help your patient remember to tell you when medication issues arise.**

It's important to actively involve your patient in his medication management, says **Pat Jump** with Rice Lake, Wis.-based **Acorn's End Training & Consulting**. To help put your patients on the path to success with their medication management, try this handy form from Jump. Share this tool with the patient and his family to help foster better medication management.

#### Medication Management Client Teaching Tool

This is what you should tell your patients: It is very important that you keep your home care team informed about your medications. Tell them about all the medicines you take, including those prescribed by your doctor and all over-the-counter medicines, such as pain relievers, antacids, cold medicines, and laxatives. Don't forget to include eye drops, dietary supplements, vitamins, herbals, and topical medicines, such as creams and ointments.

Remind them that they should call your home care agency at \_\_\_\_\_ for any of the following:

- You have any questions about your medications.
- Your medication dosage changes, you discontinue any medications, or you start any new medications.
- You are having trouble getting any of your medication prescriptions filled for any reason.
- You are having trouble paying for your medications.
- You forget to take your medications.
- You need help setting up your medications.
- You have trouble telling your medicines apart or seeing your medication labels.

#### TIPS FOR SAFE MEDICATION USE

- To help you organize information about your medicines, list all the prescription and over-the-counter medicines, dietary supplements, vitamins, and herbals you take. Bring this list with you when you see your doctors and any other health care professional.
- Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist to help you write out a complete medicine schedule, with directions on exactly when and how to take your medicines.
- Notify your regular doctor if another doctor changes any of your medications.
- Use a calendar, pill box, or other tools, to help you remember what you need to take and when. If needed, post notes around the house to remind you to take your medicines each day.
- Some medications should be taken with food and some medications should be taken several hours before or after eating. Be sure to check with your doctor or pharmacist.
- Many medicines do not mix well with alcohol. Never drink any beer, wine, or hard liquor while taking a medicine unless your doctor says it is okay.
- Side effects are unplanned symptoms or feelings you have when taking a medicine. Be sure to notify your physician of any side effects you may be experiencing.
- Take the medicine in the exact amount (never more or less) listed on the label.
- Take your medicines for the whole time they are prescribed, even if you feel better.
- Take only your own medicines. Taking someone else's medicine may hide your symptoms and make diagnosing your illness more difficult for your doctor.
- Never give friends or family medicine meant for you.

- Keep medicines in a cool, dry place, away from bright light. Medicines should not be kept in places where heat and moisture can alter their effectiveness. Do not keep medicines in the refrigerator, unless your doctor or pharmacist, or the label tells you to do so.
- Before you travel, make sure you have enough medicine with you to cover all of the time you will be away.
- Get prescriptions refilled early enough to avoid running out of medicine, which may cause problems with your medicine schedule.
- Never take prescription medications that have
- expired dates.
- Regularly go through your medicine cabinet and throw away any medications that have expired or you no longer are using.
- Use only one pharmacy for all of your prescription medications.
- Always read and follow the directions on the medicine label.
- Never take aspirin if you are taking a prescription blood thinner, such as warfarin (Coumadin), unless your doctor tells you to.
- Common over the counter (OTC) medicines include pain relievers, laxatives, cough and cold products, and antacids. Some OTC medicines, however, can affect the way prescription medicines work or are used by the body. Always talk with your doctor about all OTC medicines you take.