

HEALTH

Talk Before You Take When Dealing With Medicine

NewsUSA

(NU) - Experts say communication is key when dealing with prescription medicine.

Research has shown that a gap in communication between health care providers (HCPs) and patients about the potential risks of prescription medicines can result in adverse drug events. Increasing communication about prescriptions can help ensure that patients avoid such events, improve adherence to their medicine regimen(s) and live healthier lives.

The National Council on Patient Information and Education (NCPPIE) launched a campaign earlier this year called “Talk Before You Take,” aiming to spark this necessary patient/HCP engagement and encourage more conversations between patients and HCPs.

“It’s imperative that health care providers and patients keep the lines of communication flowing,” says Ray Bullman, NCPPIE executive vice president.

Bullman and his colleagues’ research for the campaign was developed by Johns Hopkins University and Ipsos Healthcare, with support from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

According to the National Center for Health Statistics, nearly half of Americans take prescription medicines, and over 20 percent of Americans take at least three. However, the research found that approximately 62 percent of patients were not aware of any safety warnings about their medicines. Ten percent of patients unaware of the possibility of a severe side effect actually experi-



ence a serious reaction.

“It is important for patients to understand how to take their medicines safely so they experience all the benefits and minimize the potential risks,” said Janet Woodcock, M.D., director of the FDA’s Center for Drug Evaluation and Research. “Talk Before You Take encourages more discussion about medications between patients and their health care providers and pharmacists, which can improve the health of patients and our health care system.”

In addition, the campaign offers four tips for patients and caregivers to guide conversations with HCPs:

- Talk to your health care provider and ask questions about the benefits and potential risks of prescription medicines you take.
- Tell your health care provider about all of the medicines you are taking – including over-the-counter medicines, vitamins and dietary supplements.
- Tell your health care provider about any allergies or sensitivities that you may have.
- Read and follow the medicine label and directions.

For more information, visit www.talkbeforeyoutake.org. This work is supported by FDA grant number 5U18FD004653-03.