

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations



Department of Human Services Division of Elderly Affairs

RHODE ISLAND SENIOR BEAT

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MANAGE YOUR MEDICATIONS AND SAVE MONEY TOO

CRANSTON --- For many seniors, taking medications daily is an integral part of their routines to maintain good health and wellness. For medications to be used for maximum effectiveness, however, they must be taken correctly. Do you take them with food or water? Do you take them on an empty stomach? How many times a day do you take them? At what time(s) during the day do you take them? Are there certain foods or liquids that you should avoid when taking them? All of these factors are important if you want to take your medications safely, cut down on harmful reactions, and get the most out of your prescriptions.

The National Council on Aging (NCOA) offers these tips on taking your medications:

Be informed. Make sure that you understand the medications you are taking and why you are taking them. Ask about possible interactions with other drugs and over-the-counter medications, herbal supplements and vitamins that you may be taking. Keep an up-to-date list of all medications with you and share that list with your doctor and pharmacist.

Use one pharmacy. Talk to your pharmacist when you begin taking a new medication. Your pharmacist is a great resource for you to make sure that you are taking your medications correctly, safely, and with maximum effectiveness. The pharmacist can also tell you about possible drug interactions.

Understand and pay attention to possible side effects. Some medications can cause drowsiness, dizziness, an upset stomach and other digestive problems, blurred vision, dry mouth, and other uncomfortable, even dangerous complications. Talk with your doctor and pharmacist about any possible side effects. Report any adverse medication reactions to your healthcare professionals immediately.

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74 West Road, Cranston, RI 02920
Telephone 401-462-3000, Fax 401-462-0503, TTY 401-462-0740
Web Site: www.dea.ri.gov

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Store your medications safely. Some medications may need to be refrigerated. Humidity can affect medications. Medications should be stored in a cool, dark, dry location. Get into the habit of looking through your medicine chest regularly and discard any expired medications. Your pharmacist can advise you on how to get rid of your medications safely. Keep a long of medications that you need to take daily and note what time of day and how many times daily you need to take your medications. Most importantly, take your medications as prescribed.

Now that you know the rules on taking medications safely, you should also know that there are ways to help you pay for your prescriptions. By now, you probably have a Medicare Prescription Drug (Medicare Part D) plan. Assistance in paying for Medicare Part D plan premiums and other expenses (Low-Income Subsidy-LIS, or “Extra Help”) may be available for beneficiaries who have limited income and resources. For more information, contact the Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213, or go to www.ssa.gov. The TTY number is 1-800-325-0778.

The Rhode Island Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Elderly (RIPAE) program pays some of the cost of RIPAE-approved prescription medications during the deductible phase and offers partial reimbursement for RIPAE- approved medications for enrollees who enter the “donut hole” of their Medicare Prescription Drug Plan (Medicare Part D). Rhode Island residents 65 and older who meet certain income limits and provide proof of Medicare Part D coverage, and adults age 55 to 64 receiving Social Security Disability (SSDI) payments, may be eligible. For information, call the Division of Elderly Affairs at 462-3000, or go to www.dea.ri.gov. The TTY number is 462-0740.

NeedyMeds is an information clearinghouse that helps those who are unable to afford their medications or health care costs to access patient assistance programs. Call 1-978-281-6666 for information, or go to www.needymeds.org. Many pharmaceutical manufacturers make some of their drugs available, free of charge, to patients who have difficulty paying for them. Contact the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America at 1-877-743-6779, or log on to www.RxforRI.org. Information is also available from the Partnership for Prescription Assistance at 1-888-4PPA-NOW (1-888-477-2669), or on the web at www.pparx.org.

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Senior Journal broadcast schedule: The Senior Journal cable television explores the issues of growing older and the challenges faced by adults with disabilities in Rhode Island. The Senior Journal is produced by senior volunteers and adults with disabilities, and is sponsored by DEA, with the support of Rhode Island Public, Education, and Government Access Television. Programs are broadcast on Sundays at 5:00 p.m., Mondays at 7:00 p.m., and Tuesdays at 11:30 a.m. over statewide interconnect cable channel 13 and Verizon channel 32.

From March 3 through March 12, *Rhode Island Community Food Bank* will be aired. Paul Roberti of East Providence, program host and producer, interviews Andrew Schiff, executive director of the Rhode Island Community Food Bank.

From March 17 through March 26, *Identity Theft and the IRS* will be broadcast. Roberti interviews Peggy Riley, media specialist for the IRS.

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The Rhode Island Department of Human Services, Division of Elderly Affairs (DEA) is responsible for the development and implementation of a comprehensive system of programs and services for Rhode Islanders ages 60 and older and for adults with disabilities. Questions or requests for additional information on the issues of growing older, or for issues concerning adults with disabilities in Rhode Island should be directed to: Larry Grimaldi, Rhode Island Senior Beat, Rhode Island Department of Human Services, Division of Elderly Affairs, 74 West Road, Cranston, RI 02920 or faxed to 462-0545. The e-mail address is lgrimaldi@dea.ri.gov.

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