



# *PacifiCare* Health Watch

*Patient Safety – Be an active member of your health care team!*

## Medicines - Keep Your Doctor Informed

Let your doctors know about any prescription and over-the-counter medicines, and dietary supplements such as vitamins and herbs you are taking. Let your doctor know about any allergies and adverse reactions you have had to medicines.

### Information About Your Medicines

When your doctor writes you a prescription, confirm the medicine and dosage. Make sure you review the following:

- What are the brand and generic names of the medications?
- What does it look like?
- How do you take the medicine and for how long?
- What should you do if you miss a dose?
- What side effects are likely? What do you do if they occur?
- Is this medicine safe to take with other medicines or dietary supplements you are currently taking?
- What food, drink or activities should be avoided while taking this medicine?
- Where and how should you store the medications?

When you pick up your prescription from the pharmacy, confirm that it is the medicine and dosage prescribed by your doctor. Use the appropriate instrument to measure your liquid medicine. Many household teaspoons do not hold a true teaspoon of liquid. Special instruments, like marked syringes, help measure the right dose.

### Hospital Stays

Be observant of practices/preparations going on around you. Before you are discharged, review

your home treatment plan with your doctor. If you are having surgery, make sure that you, your doctor, and your surgeon all agree on exactly what will be done.

### Take the Initiative – Speak up!

Don't be afraid to ask questions or express concerns. If you have many health problems or are in a hospital, make sure that your personal doctor is in charge of/or coordinating your care. All health professionals involved in your care should have important health information about you – don't assume they already know. A family member or friend should be there with you to be your advocate (someone who can help get things done and speak up for you if you can't). Don't hesitate to ask for a second opinion. Follow up with your doctor if you have not received your lab results. Stay informed with the latest developments for your condition's treatment by asking your doctor, nurse or other reliable sources.

### At home ...

- Many pills look alike, so always keep medications in their original containers.
- Never take someone else's medication. It may be the wrong dose for you and you don't know if it will interact with your medication or you may be allergic to it.
- Don't chew, crush or break tablets or capsules unless instructed by your doctor. Some medications are absorbed quickly when chewed, some medications won't be as effective or could make you sick.
- Keep all medications away from children and pets. Flush old medications down the toilet, some drugs become toxic after the expiration date.

*Questions?*

*Call the*

*Customer Service*

*Department*

*toll-free at*

*1-800-531-3341.*