

**Your Medication List—A Valuable Tool For Medication Management**



**Glen Howard, Pharm. D.**

Did you know that something as simple as keeping a medication list could dramatically affect how well a health-care professional can respond to your needs should illness or injury strike?

More often than not, when asked to provide a complete list of ALL medications they take, patients are not aware that even over-the-counter drugs, herbal supplements and certain foods that might be part of a special diet regimen can counteract the effects of other prescribed drugs.

Many seniors over the age of 55 are taking five or more medications daily, some multiple times a day. Keeping a complete list of medications is important, including both prescription drugs and other items that you are taking on a regular basis. The list should be brought to all doctor's appointments and hospital admissions, and be accessible should emergency treatment be necessary.

Other things to keep in mind:

- Include food and drug allergies on your medication list. Also list low-salt, low-sugar or special diets.

- Store medications in a safe, cool, dry place. Bathroom medicine cabinets, or near the kitchen stove or sink, are NOT recommended. Heat or moisture can cause the medicine to break down. When traveling, carry your medicine with you. Not only can checked luggage get lost or stolen, medications can break down and become ineffective if stored in a very cold or very hot area such as the cargo area of an airplane.

- Keep medications in their original containers with the directions on the bottle. DO NOT mix several medications in one bottle.

- Stick with one pharmacy if possible. Your complete medication profile will be in one central spot, and the pharmacists will be able to monitor you for adverse reactions and drug to drug interactions.

Most importantly, ASK questions before you leave the pharmacy, such as:

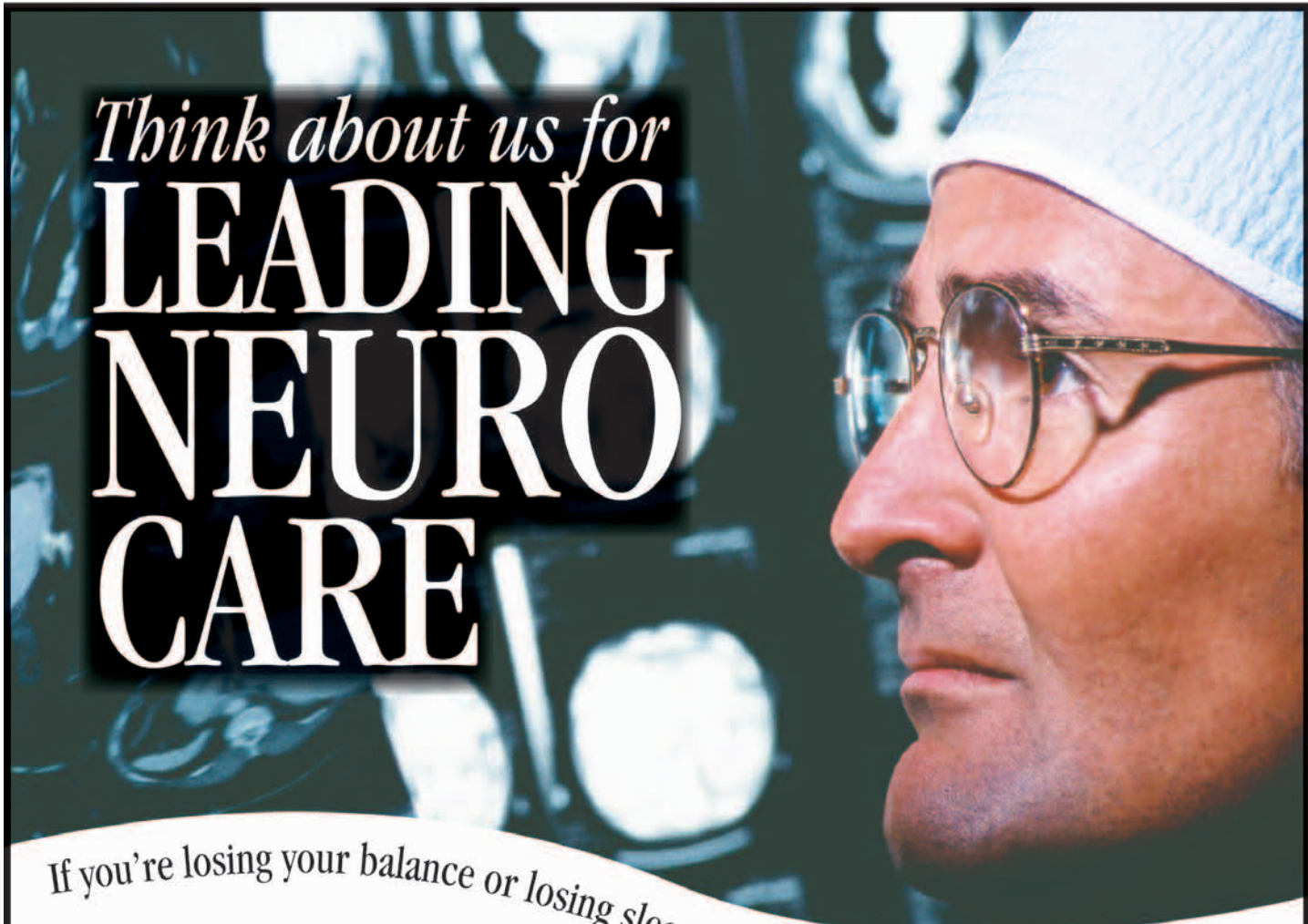
- What are the brand and generic names of the medication?
- What does the medication look like?
- Why am I taking the medicine?
- What should I do if I miss a dose?
- What side effects should I expect, and what should I do if they happen?
- Does this replace anything else I am taking?

Proper medication management includes being an informed, prepared consumer.

*Glen Howard, Pharm. D., is the Pharmacy Clinical Coordinator with North Broward Medical Center.*

*For more information or for a physician referral, call the North Broward Hospital District Healthline at 954-759-7400.*

*North Broward Medical Center is a community hospital providing a full spectrum of healthcare services including trauma, emergency, surgical and acute medical care in a friendly, family-oriented atmosphere. Specialized areas include the Comprehensive Cancer Center, Neurological Institute, Inpatient/Outpatient Rehabilitation Unit and Diabetes Center. North Broward Medical Center, which opened in 1961, is one of more than 35 healthcare facilities of the North Broward Hospital District. The District is a medical safety net for Broward County residents.*



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