

Welcome to the Q-tips for Your Ears podcast series. During each

session, we will highlight a new topic to improve health care

quality and patient outcomes. My name is Dee Kaiser and my

colleague Tammy Wagner is with me again. Today, we are quality

improvement advisors for the Great Plains Quality Innovation

Network. Thanks for taking the time to join us. Our topic today

is what is an adverse drug event. So, hello, Tammy. Hello,

Dee. It's nice to.

Talk with you again. Well, and hello to our listeners. Alright.

So, Tammy, what is an adverse drug event? Well, Dee, an

adverse drug event is any injury that results from medication

use, including physical harm, mental harm or loss of function.

In other words, when someone is harmed by a medicine in any way,

although taking any medicine can lead to an adverse drug event,

there are a few that have higher risk to them.

Those are blood thinners. One example is Coumadin, or

warfarin. Diabetes medications, as insulin.

Some oral would be like glipizide and metformin. Seizure

medications, such as phenytoin, even inhalers or asthma

medication, and then, of course,

pain medicine or opioids are

other examples. OK, so most of these medications are by a

prescription. So how do adverse drug events happen? Well,

polypharmacy, we call it or taking more medications than

clinically necessary is the strongest risk factor.

For a person to have an adverse drug event, older patients who

take more medicines are more vulnerable to medication adverse

effects.

Other reasons are prescription errors, either wrong dose or

lack of understanding of the person of how to take the

medicine.

Medication reconciliation errors, which is what healthcare

professionals do when reviewing the medications the person is

taking as they move from one setting to another. So an

example would be you're in the hospital, you need to go to

skilled nursing facility for a time for rehabilitation. That

would be when a medication reconciliation would need to be

done. There can be a risk that some of the medicines interact

causing health issues for that person.

And This is why it's so important for people to tell

their health care providers  
about all the medications

they're taking, both prescribed  
by a doctor and those they take

over the counter, such as  
vitamins or any supplements.

Patient errors is another people  
misunderstand their doctor's

instructions. Forget how much of  
a medicine they have already

taken, or mistakenly take too  
much, or sometimes too little of

their prescription meds. Still  
very true. It's it's hard when

you leave a hospital setting and  
you go home and you're not

feeling well when they talk to  
you, and then they have brand

names and generics. Ohhh my  
gosh, yes. Find out a week later

that you've been taking double  
of a medicine because one was

written.

In the brand name of one was  
written at the generic name,

yes, so and those instructions  
can be so confusing. So that is

why it's very important to talk  
to your pharmacist and ask about

those medicines and make sure  
that they review.

Alright, so help us understand  
why we need to know about these

adverse drug events. Well, older  
adults visit emergency

departments almost 450,000 times  
each year related to an adverse

drug event.

1.3 million emergency department visits each year are due to an adverse drug event.

And about 350,000 people every year need to be hospitalized for further treatment after emergency visits for adverse drug events.

Sometimes we rely so much on medicines that we don't think

about the fact that they have side effects and they can

interact with each other by being an informed person or

consumer and being involved in your own healthcare. A person

can decrease the risks and get the most benefit from the

medicines that they need to take. I don't want people to

think that they shouldn't take any medications. However, people

need to be informed and understand what they are being

prescribed to take and why.

They also need to keep a record of all the medicines they take.

Again, not just the medicine the Doctor prescribes, but also

those that they take over the counter. Examples include if you

take aspirin and Tylenol, ibuprofen, any vitamins, all

dietary supplements. These two can interact with the

prescription medications that a doctor prescribes.

It's also important for people to know the potential side

effects of the medicines that they take.

Alright, so uh Coumadin was in here and it won a vitamin or

dietary supplements such as fish oil. Yeah, and krill oil can

affect how Coumadin works in the body. Yes. So it's just you

gotta tell your physician you have for you're saying

everything. Yeah. So is.

I mean, who's affected by these adverse drug events? That is it

just people who were on like, fiber, more medicines or two or

more or no, it's really anyone who takes any medicine or cares

for someone who takes any medicine. Right. So that's

everybody, right? Yeah. Pretty much. OK. So how can people

reduce adverse drug events if these things are happening when

you transition from hospital to home, from hospital to a skilled

care facility?

Maybe you're going just from the clinic home. Yeah. I mean, these

happen everywhere, right? And, yeah, they absolutely anytime at

any time, anywhere. So you wanna find out the name of your

medication, ask questions about how to use the medicine. And

this can be from your doctor.

But again, I'm going to say it

again. Your pharmacist is the best source and has all the

knowledge about all medications. And I've said it before, think

of them as you do a specialist in a field such as a heart

doctor.

The heart doctor knows all about the heart. A pharmacist is a

doctor of medicine. Who knows what your medication is for? You

want to read medicine labels and follow the directions. And I

know that that is really difficult. Sometimes my eyesight

is going quickly. Me too. And yes. But if you really do have,

you know, some visual issues. Have someone help. You have them

write it down. Be there when the doctor's prescribing.

So you want to know?

What the medicine does, what are the side effects, when to start

and stop taking the medicine? Will this medicine work safely

with other medicines that I'm already taking? Can drug

interactions or actions help my symptoms in addition to or

instead of this medicine? Are there other medicines that can

be used to treat my condition? If so, how do these medicines

compare and safety, effectiveness and price?

Why is the right medicine for my condition, age, gender, and how

do I take it? Should I avoid certain foods, alcohol, dietary

supplements or even driving while on it?

So those printouts that you get at the pharmacy are important.

They are, you should read them. Am I always good about that? No,

I'm not. No, but we should. Or again, if you have some

visual impairments.

There is a place to consult with the pharmacist there and they

can, you know, people are different kinds of learners.

Some people are better readers. I am not. I skim. So I wanna

hear it. It when? When I hear it and then maybe I see it, it

absorbs better. So you know, however you learn, you need to

know that too. But use that pharmacist. I think it's always

good too if you have someone to go with you. Yes. Four eyes.

And four ears sometimes are better, especially if you're the

person who's ill or you've just gone through a major illness or

surgery. If you have someone who can go with you and also on this

day and age, you know you're iPhones, have recorders on them.

Yeah. Record. If you're a listener more than a reader,

record the conversation so that

you can go back and listen to

it. Or, you know, when the when  
the nurse and daughter comes in

and says, what did the  
pharmacist say about this? You

can say, well, here you go.  
Here's the recording.

Or put them on a. You know, a  
group, A group call or something

too. Yeah, it's really important  
to always let a loved one know

what the list of medications are  
as well. They need to know

dosages and times and and. And  
then keeping that list up to

date after appointments with  
your primary care physician or

specialty physician.

But just be sure to have those  
conversations with the provider

pharmacist that also includes  
them providing instructions and

asking for you to repeat them  
back. This is called teach back

and it is practice that has a  
lot of evidence behind it that

leads to better understanding of  
what is being discussed. This

way the provider can address if  
there was a break in

communication or understanding  
of the information that was

shared.

Very good practice. It's back.  
So where can people learn more

about adverse drug events and  
how they can help reduce them?

Alright. Well, you can again,  
you can always go to

thegreatplainsqin.org website  
and that is under initiatives

and improving patient safety and  
there is an adverse drug events

tab or the cdc.gov has  
medication safety, adult under

score, adverse drug.

Events. Thank you very much.  
This is.

From an important topic and and  
making sure I mean I I know in

the medical world we have been  
working on medication

reconciliation for many years  
and there's all kinds of things

that hospitals and clinics have  
put into place to hopefully

catch any type of duplicates of  
medications or.

You know the brand name, the  
generic name, but you really

want to make sure that you've  
got a good understanding of what

you're on and carry the  
medication list with you. Yeah,

absolutely. And you know, one  
final thought, too is, I think

as we get older, we need to ask  
our.

Doctors about the risk benefit.  
There are some medicines that if

you were an elderly person, you  
just do not need to be on

anymore. So make sure you're  
having those conversations

because there's so many side

effects and side effects from an individual medication. But the drug drug interactions can cause falls. They can cause, you know, low blood pressure, pressure, slow blood, sure, low blood sugar.

Things that do increase fall risk less, especially our senior.

Population, Sir. Sure. All right. Great information as always.

We hope you've enjoyed today's Q-tips for your ears session. We look forward to connecting with you next time.