

## **IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW YOUR MEDICATIONS**

Pill, pills, pills. We take them for just about everything and for many of us, that adds up to many pills everyday. With so many medications available to consumers, prescription, non-prescription, herbals and supplements, how can you manage your medications safely?

Your medication history outlines your unique health issues. It is also important to have a good understanding about the medications you are taking so that you may pass that information along when you are admitted to a hospital or visit your doctor. A few basic steps can help you communicate this information and promote medication safety:

- Keep a current list of all the medications, vitamins, herbs and supplements on a medication card. (These cards are available at Mercy Medical Center or by clicking the back button and clicking on the link called "[Personal Medication Profile Card.](#)")
- This card should be kept with you at all times, like your driver's license.
- Bring your medication card to every doctor's appointment, so that it may be updated with any changes in your medication history.
- Your hospital's medical staff uses your medication card to help you avoid any potential drug interactions. It should be given to the hospital staff as soon as you arrive.
- By keeping your medication card updated, you will always be able to provide health care providers with an accurate medication history. Be sure to include the dates of your last flu and/or pneumonia vaccines.
- Ask questions about all of your medications and know why you are taking them. Ask about medication side effects.
- Speak-up if you feel your medications are not correct or you are having a reaction or experiencing side effects.

As a health care consumer, it is very important for you to understand your treatment plan, which usually will include medication(s). Not only will this information keep you safer at home, it will also give your doctor a better understanding of your health issues.

Beth A. Monaco, RN, MSN  
Clinical Patient Safety Coordinator  
Mercy Medical Center