

My Medicines: Take your medication list with you

Can carrying around a brochure help save your life? Yes, if it's the "My Medicines" brochure offered by Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Office of Women's Health (OWH). It's designed to help consumers track the medications they use.

My Medicines features a chart that allows you to list information about your prescription medicines, including the names of the medicines, how much you take, when you take them, what condition they are treating, and the number of refills.

The brochure also offers advice on how to use labeling information, how to avoid problems with your medicines, and questions you should ask your doctor or pharmacist about your prescriptions.

This brochure is available online at www.fda.gov/womens/taketimetocare/mymeds.html, as well as through the mail and from insurance providers, pharmacies, hospitals, health fairs, senior centers, and other venues.

A case history

Coral Thomas, a resident of Clarksville, Tenn., is particularly glad that she picked up a My Medicines brochure during a visit to her doctor.

Thomas filled out the brochure, and placed it in her purse. It was there to help her when, at age 66, she suffered a heart attack. "The heart doctor at the hospital told me that (filling out and keeping the brochure) was the smartest thing I could have done," she reported.

Seeing that Thomas was taking daily treatments for high blood pressure and other conditions, the doctor changed his treatment plan. He later told Thomas he wished that every patient would carry such a list because it helps caregivers know the best way to proceed.

After her recovery, Thomas ordered dozens more My Medicines brochures and distributed them to her friends. "It's just the best thing to have," she says. "Women should carry one in their purses and keep a spare in their cars. Believe me, it can save your life."

Of course, the brochure can prove helpful to men as well.

Take Time to Care

My Medicines, which is available in 14 languages, is part of an outreach initiative called "Take Time to Care" (TTTC), which was launched by OWH in 1998 to provide reliable, science-based health information. Millions of My Medicine brochures have been distributed since the program's launch.

To order "My Medicines" through the mail, visit: www.pueblo.gsa.gov/results.tpl?id1=16&startat=1&--woSECTIONSdatarq=16&--SECTIONSword=ww. Or, call the Federal Citizen Information Center toll-free at 1-888-878-3256 and order publication 556R.