Medications: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly

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Supporters

- Deaf Health Talks is possible through the support of:
  - Rochester Recreation Club for the Deaf (“REAP”)
  - Deaf Health Community Committee (DHCC)
Goals of Presentation

- Medication importance
- Potential dangers of medications
- Generics versus brand name medications
- Vitamins, supplements, and herbs
- Question & Answer Time
Medications

- The right medication can:
  - Cure your disease
  - Manage your disease better
  - Improve your quality of life

- The wrong medication can:
  - Cause worse health and even death
  - Can cause bad symptoms
Life Saving Medication Examples

- Antibiotics (e.g. penicillin)
  - Reduced deaths from bacterial infections
- Aspirin
  - Reduced deaths from heart attacks and strokes
- Statins (e.g. atorvastatin)
  - Reduced deaths from heart attacks and strokes
The Dangers of Medications

- Over 40,000 Americans died from poisoning from legal or illegal drugs
  - More died from drugs than car crashes
  - 40% of these deaths were from use or misuse of narcotics (strong pain relievers) alone!
  - Most deaths from medications are from medication errors or inappropriate use
  - Key to staying healthy is to know your medications and to follow directions

Dangerous Medications

- **Warfarin (blood thinners)**
- **Diuretics (water pills)**
  - Can cause low potassium levels
- **Thyroid replacement (e.g. Synthroid)**
  - Monitor levels
  - Take with empty stomach
  - Avoid taking with vitamins, calcium, iron
- **Erectile dysfunction meds (e.g. Viagra)**
  - Avoid taking with nitroglycerin
  - Vision issues
Dangerous Medications

- **Pain medications**
- **Hormone replacement therapy/OCP**
  - Caution if you smoke or older than 35- higher rates of blood clots
- **Statins (e.g. Lipitor)**
  - Liver monitoring is required
  - Avoid high amounts of grapefruit
- **Antibiotics**
- **Digoxin**- blood work needed to monitor levels
Blood Thinners

- Used for people at high risk for blood clots and stroke
  - Atrial fibrillation or clotting disorders
  - Blood thinner can save lives from blood clots but may also cause harm from bleed risk

- Warfarin (Coumadin)
  - Medication can interfere with other medications
  - Requires regular blood monitoring
  - Vitamin K rich foods can reduce amount of warfarin
    - Broccoli, cabbage, kale, dark greens, spices, herbs
Blood Thinners- continued

- Newer medications
  - Pradaxa (dabigatran)
  - Eliquis (apixaban)

- May be more effective than warfarin
- No blood monitoring needed
- Little data showing if medication is safe to use for long term
Pain Medications

- Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)
  - Advil (ibuprofen)- max 1800-2400 mg daily
  - Aleve (naproxen)- max 1000 mg daily
  - Can increase blood pressure and heart attack risk
  - Can cause stomach bleeding and irritation
  - Avoid if you have poor kidney function or issues
Pain Medications

- Tylenol (acetaminophen)
  - Avoid taking more than 2400 mg daily
  - Avoid if you have liver problems
  - Overdose can cause liver failure
Pain Medications

- Narcotics
  - Vicodone (hydrocodone)
  - Oxycontin (oxycodone)
  - Percocet (oxycodone)
  - Dilaudid (hydromorphone)
  - Codeine
  - Can cause severe constipation (can’t poop)
  - Overdose can kill!
  - Can cause dependency and addiction!
Antibiotics

- Can be used to treat severe bacterial infections
  - Examples include: pneumonia, cellulitis, urinary tract infection
- Does not treat viruses!
- Most of the time, no antibiotics are needed to treat an infection
Antibiotics

- Resistance
  - Overuse/ Improper use/ Too old
  - Methicillin Resistant Staph Aureus (MRSA)
  - Poor response to antibiotics

- Superimposed infections
  - Yeast infections
  - Clostridium difficile colitis

- Partial dosing-leads to resistance
Side effects vs Allergies

- Side effects (unwanted response)
  - GI effects (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea)
  - Abnormal labs
  - Cognitive (fatigue, confusion)

- Allergy (immune controlled)
  - Rash
  - Shortness of breath
  - Swelling
Pediatric Dosing

- Use of liquid measurements
  - 5 cc equals one teaspoon
  - 15 cc equals one tablespoon
- Weight based
- Age based
- Cold remedies
Brand names vs Generics

- **Brand names**
  - Large pharmaceutical companies
  - Heavy advertising (media and samples)
  - More costly

- **Generics**
  - Smaller pharmaceutical companies
  - Little or no advertising
  - Cheaper
  - Mostly similar effect
Red pill vs Blue pill

- Color is not a dependable way to know which medication you have
- Keep an updated medication list
- Bring medications with you
- Pill cutting?

immortalfitblog.blogspot.com
Pill Variations

- Lisinopril (common blood pressure medication) has 54 different pill types
Medications and Food Interactions

- There are few types to be aware of:
  - Grapefruits
    - Statins
    - Blood pressure medications
    - Seizure medications
  - High Vitamin K foods
    - Warfarin
Taking Medications Safely

- Work with your doctor
  - Bring all of your medications, vitamins and herbs you are taking at each appointment
  - Talk with your doctor before you make any medication changes
    - Certain medications may help you in multiple ways
  - Let your doctor know as early as possible that you need more medications ordered
Taking Medications Safely

- Vitamins and herbs are drugs too!
  - They may help but they also can harm
  - Eat a varied diet with plenty of vegetables, fruits, and herbs to get more benefits from these foods than in a pill form (“symbiosis”)

healthyrecipes.wikia.com
Herbs

- Important info about herbs
  - Kava kava (anxiety)
    - Can harm the liver
  - St. John’s Wort (used for depression)
    - Can interfere with many medications including blood thinners

- Getting ready for surgery- many herbs can increase bleeding risk
  - Garlic, ginseng, echnicacea, fish oil (not herb)
Vitamins

- A single multi-vitamin is ok to take daily
  - If eat a healthy diet, no need for vitamins
  - Cost issues
  - Hot water and vinegar test
    - If pill does not dissolve within 2 hours, your body doesn’t absorb it well
Important Vitamins

- Vitamin D (sunshine vitamin)
  - Helps keep bones strong and may help with cancer and heart prevention
  - Everyone should take Vitamin D3 800-2000 IU daily
  - Sunscreen and female make-up block our ability to make vitamin D
  - Sunlight is also reduced by: 1) Air pollution; 2) Darker skin; 3) Winter time; 4) Cloudy days
Important Vitamins and supplements

- Calcium
  - Helps to keep bones strong
  - Females should take 1200-1500 mg daily

- Fish Oil
  - Can help with heart prevention for older individuals
  - Ask doctor if you should take this and how much
Other Vitamins and supplements

- Iron
  - Important for young females who have their menses ("periods")
  - Iron from diet is usually enough
  - Some may need iron supplements
  - Avoid long term use
Questions???

- Thank you!
- Next Deaf Health Talk will be on September, 2012