

A) Medication Labels Key Words

Chart

Pharmacist

Container

Prescribe

Doctor

Primary

Drug

Problem

Interaction

Question

Instruction

Record

Labels

Regular

Medicine

Specialist

B) Introduction

Learning Outcomes

At the end of Lesson 7, learners should be able to:

- a) **use** the words that are listed in the Lesson 7 key words list and discuss what they mean in the context of this lesson and in their lives
- b) **explain** the information that is commonly found on prescribed and non-prescribed medication labels
- c) **explain** the basic information on their own medications
- d) **explain** the meaning of various warning labels
- e) **complete** a personal medication record booklet

Lesson 7 literacy activities

The types of literacy activities in Lesson 7 are:

- a) **Reading** exercise on “Making the Most of Medications”
- b) **Fill-in-the-blanks** with words from the above reading material that are on the key words list
- c) **Word search** - to find the words that are listed in the “Medication Labels” key words list
- d) **Reading** medication labels
- e) **Writing** exercises using *The LaRue Medical Literacy Exercises* created by Charles LaRue through the Minnesota Department of Education and Minnesota Literacy Council. (www.mcedservices.com)

Activities are explained further in the lesson. Facilitators may use additional literacy activities to help learners enhance their understanding of medication labels.

C) Reading Exercise

Facilitator Notes: According to the SMOG test, the following text is written at about a Grade 9 reading level, or literacy level 2 and may be read using *assisted* or *choral* reading techniques. In *assisted* reading, facilitator and learners take turns reading parts of the text, whereas *choral* reading involves reading together. These techniques are described further in Section 2 of the manual of the Nova Scotia Tutor & Instructor Training and Certification Program.

Making the Most of Medications

Your doctor may prescribe a drug for your condition. Make sure you know the name of the drug and understand why it has been prescribed for you. Ask the doctor to write down how often and how long you should take it. Make notes about any other special instructions such as foods or drinks you should avoid. If you are taking other medications, make sure your doctor knows, so he or she can prevent harmful interactions.

Sometimes medicines affect older people differently than younger people. Let the doctor know if your medicine doesn't seem to be working or if it is causing problems. It is best not to stop taking the medicine on your own. If you do stop taking your medicine, let your doctor's office know as soon as possible. If another doctor (e.g. a specialist)

C) Reading Exercise (continued)

prescribes a medication for you, call your primary doctor's office and leave a message letting him or her know. Also call to check with your doctor's office before taking any over-the-counter medications. You may find it helpful to keep a chart of all the medicines you take and when you take them.

The pharmacist is also a good source of information about your medicines. In addition to answering questions and helping you to select non-prescribed medications, the pharmacist keeps records of all the prescriptions you get filled at that drug store. Because your pharmacist keeps these records, it is helpful to use a regular drug store. At your request, the pharmacist can fill your prescriptions in easy-to-open containers and may be able to provide large-print prescription labels.

(Adapted from *Talking with your Doctor: A Guide for Older People*, Ageing International, Winter 2003, Vol.28, No.1, p.98-113.)

D) Fill-in-the-Blanks Activity

Facilitator Notes: Having read the first text, the learner is then asked to re-read the following same text and to fill in the missing words verbally. This activity is meant to re-enforce learning from the first reading.

Learner Activity**Making the Most of Medications**

Your doctor may prescribe a drug for your condition. Make sure you know the name of the drug and understand why it has been _____ for you. Ask the doctor to write down how often and how long you should take it. Make notes about any other special _____ such as foods or drinks you should avoid. If you are taking other medications, make sure your doctor knows, so he or she can prevent harmful _____.

Sometimes medicines affect older people differently than younger people. Let the doctor know if your _____ doesn't seem to be working or if it is causing _____. It is best not to stop taking the medicine on your own. If you do stop taking your medicine, let your _____'s office know as soon as possible. If another doctor (e.g. a _____)

D) Fill-in-the-Blanks Activity (continued)

prescribes a medication for you, call your _____ doctor's office and leave a message letting him or her know. Also call to check with your doctor's office before taking any over-the-counter medications. You may find it helpful to keep a _____ of all the medicines you take and when you take them.

The _____ is also a good source of information about your medicines. In addition to answering _____ and helping you to select non-prescribed medications, the pharmacist keeps _____ of all the prescriptions you get filled at that _____ store. Because your pharmacist keeps these records, it is helpful to use a _____ drug store. At your request, the pharmacist can fill your prescriptions in easy-to-open _____ and may be able to provide large-print prescription _____.

E) Word Search Exercise

Facilitator Notes: In this activity learners are asked to circle the words in the puzzle that are found on the key words list in Section A. Learners may find it helpful to list the keywords in the margin. This activity helps with word recognition and recall. (Solutions are found in the appendices.)

Learner Activity

N	O	I	T	S	E	U	Q	D	W	C	N
T	T	X	S	Q	R	G	C	O	Y	O	O
S	S	Y	E	Z	B	U	H	C	R	N	I
I	I	X	E	N	C	R	A	T	A	T	T
L	C	R	M	B	I	D	R	O	M	A	C
A	A	A	O	E	I	C	T	R	I	I	U
I	M	L	B	T	L	R	I	Q	R	N	R
C	R	U	G	B	E	B	C	D	P	E	T
E	A	G	H	X	W	K	O	S	E	R	S
P	H	E	L	E	B	A	L	R	E	M	N
S	P	R	D	R	O	C	E	R	P	R	I
N	O	I	T	C	A	R	E	T	N	I	P

F) Writing Exercises

Facilitator Notes:

a) **Activity sheets:** At the end of Lesson 7 are three sets of writing activity sheets that learners should try to complete:

A) Prescription labels

B) OTC medicine labels (These are over-the-counter medicines and are also called non-prescribed medicine)

C) Warning labels

(Answers to the questions are found in the appendices.)

These activity sheets are *The LaRue Medical Literacy Exercises* created by Charles LaRue through the Minnesota Department of Education and Minnesota Literacy Council. They are available from www.mcedservices.com by clicking on “Online activities”, then “Medicine labels and warning”.

b) **Medication record book:** Inserted at the end of Lesson 7 is an easy-to-read booklet entitled *Knowledge is the Best Medicine* produced by Canada’s Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies. The booklet contains a small medication record book in which learners can write such things as doctor’s name, their health history, allergies, contact information, and list their prescribed and non-prescribed medicines, etc. These are found in many pharmacies or they can be ordered from www.canadapharma.org by clicking on “Patient Pathways”, then “medication record”.

References and Resources

Title	Information
<i>Knowledge is the Best Medicine</i>	This is a small booklet containing basic information on knowing your medications and is also a record book in which learners can write such things as doctor’s name, their health history, allergies, contact information, and list their prescribed and non-prescribed medicines, etc. These are found in many pharmacies or they can be ordered from www.canadapharma.org by clicking on “Patient Pathways”, then “medication record”.
<i>The LaRue Medical Literacy Exercises</i>	These are literacy activities intended for adults with low literacy skills created by Charles LaRue through the Minnesota Department of Education and Minnesota Literacy Council. Activities on reading prescription labels, labels on over-the-counter medication, and the warning labels found on these products are available from www.mcedservices.com
<i>Medicines and Older Adults</i>	This is a colorful brochure on precautions to take with medications from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration at www.fda.gov
<i>Questions to Ask Your Doctor and Pharmacist: A Guide for Seniors</i>	These are questions published for older Manitobans about medications, and programs available in that province. It was developed by Manitoba Health and Manitoba Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat. www.gov.mb.ca/shas/pdf/questions_05.pdf