GA Health & Wellness brings you the "10 Commandments" of medication safety

No disrespect intended here; just a memorable way to make

Your family's medication needs safer!

1. Know thyself & thy meds : You shall not covet your neighbor's meds

Know each drug or supplement you are putting into YOUR body: Drug name? Why are YOU taking it? Dose & Strength? When & How To take it? Side effects? **Tell your doctor about things that react with drugs which can cause serious side effects:** Caffeine, Alcohol, Street drugs, Supplements/Herbals, over the counter meds

2. Thou shalt have no other Med List than the one that matches the doctor's list

Keep your own med list for any "Drugs I am Taking" and know it well.

- Keep this in your wallet at all times. Include any supplements, herbals, prescriptions, OTCs
- Show it to your primary doctor & be sure their "list" matches yours
- Share it with any specialists/consultants or family for a back up

3. You shall not bear false witness against your med list

Bring ALL your meds in a BAG . At least once a year, bring ALL your actual pills & supplements, pill bottles, pill boxes with you to the clinic. This is a great way to check YOUR LIST and the DOC's LIST of your medications. Often, bringing all this each visit is very helpful for clarifying doses and timing of medications

4. Honor your doctor (and advocate for yourself too)

Always check with your primary doctor if you are not sure what drugs you should be taking. If a drug is started, stopped or increased/decreased; REQUEST a visit summary to update your records/list too
**Never stop taking a drug or change how you take it without talking to your prescribing doctor**
Some medications cause serious side effects if stopped too quickly- especially those for mood like SSRIs

5. Thou shalt not steal meds

Never take a drug ordered for someone else. These may have serious side effects
or other drug to drug interactions for you **which can make you sick.**
NEVER give another person a med ordered for YOU
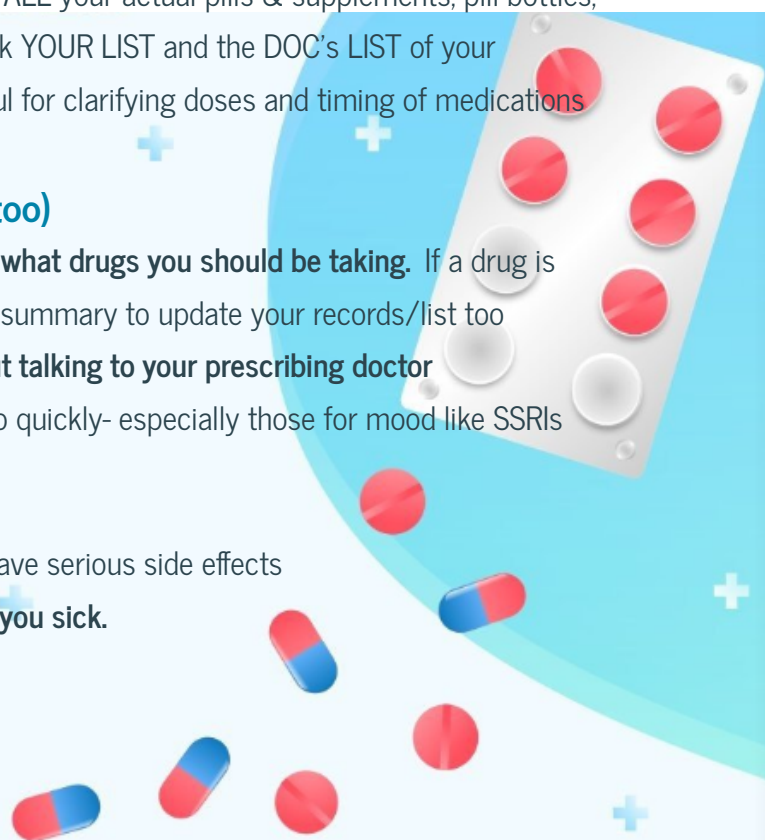
6. Don't say the doctor's name in vain if you can help it...but sometimes it's their fault

New or worsening symptoms may be drug related. If you notice these, contact your primary doctor or prescribing specialist right away to find out what to do next.

Some side effects or med interactions are unanticipated and others may be considered in the risk/benefit conversations you had before starting the medication.
ALWAYS ask provider if you have questions or concerns before making a decision

7. Remember and Keep Holy the Discharge Day.
Sabbath is a time for rest. But not for laziness.

After a hospital discharge, **it is VITAL that you and your primary care doctor or specialists are ACTIVELY aware of any med changes.** Before leaving the hospital, rehab or transitional care unit, **SET UP a "hospital follow up" appointment with your primary doctor** for ~5 days after discharge. You may need labs. A nurse may call you the day after discharge to confirm your discharge meds are correct. **BRING ALL YOUR MEDS** and the "discharge summary/instructions" to your visit in case the provider is unable to see those records.

8. Thou shalt not idolize those pill bottles

USE A PILL BOX: Don't be attached to the bottles they give you, they aren't magic.

HIDE THEM AWAY: Don't keep them in easy reach of children or adults who cannot safely

take their own meds. Consider keeping them in a locked pill box, file cabinet or locked room

9. You shall not commit pharmacy adultery

Use only ONE pharmacy if possible. Reduces medication prescribing errors. Can consolidate medication pick-ups. Try to only visit every 90 days. Consider mail order for chronic medications

Don't buy drugs from risky online pharmacies or people . Especially other countries or unreliable websites

10. Thou shalt do no harm with thy meds

Properly dispose of unused or expired drugs to avoid unintentional use by others or side effects from old meds. Be sure to cross your personal info OFF the med bottles first. You can find "Take Back" sites online.
More info here: https://doseofreality.mn.gov/drug-takeback/