

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**Talk with Your Health Care Provider**

Now is the perfect time to get a health checkup. Having regular checkups and being able to communicate openly and comfortably with your health care provider can help you make good health decisions and stay well. But some people, especially older adults, shy away from asking questions.

The best patient-provider relationship is a partnership. Both sides are responsible for good communication. To guide older patients in speaking with their doctors, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) offers "Talking with Your Doctor." This new topic is on www.NIHSeniorHealth.gov, a web site created for older people.

"Most people know talking with their health care provider is important to their health care. As they age they are more likely to have health conditions and treatments to discuss," says Elaine Bowen, West Virginia University Extension specialist. "The key is to know how to have that conversation."

This newest feature on the NIH Senior Health website has tips on talking with their doctor. Topics include how to prepare for a doctor visit, what to ask, what information to provide, and how to understand what the doctor says.

You may also find the FDA's "My Medicine Record" to be a handy online tool. My Medicine Record can be found at www.fda.gov/drugs/resourcesforyou/ucm079489.htm. Save it to your computer and keep it updated. Keep a printed copy with you at all times. Print it out and share it when you visit your doctors, pharmacists, or other health professionals. Communicating with healthcare providers about all prescription and non-prescription medications, vitamins and herbal supplements is critical to your health. It helps assure medicines are given and used correctly.

Consumers who are informed can manage their personal health and work with their healthcare professionals to make the best decisions. Knowing the best websites for quality health information is important for consumers. Some of the most reliable online health resources include:

- National Institutes of Health (www.NIHSeniorHealth.gov)
- Food and Drug Administration (www.fda.gov/consumer)
- MedlinePlus (www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/) has more detailed health information
- The West Virginia University School of Pharmacy's Center for Drug and Health Information Health-Tip (www.HTip.org) gives personalized answers about medications, web resources, and health conditions.
- Women will find helpful information tailored to their needs at (www.womenshealth.gov)
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' site (www.healthfinder.gov) has the latest news for consumers on all health topics.

Not all online resources are reliable. Avoid websites that sell products or services. They will have .com addresses, and may contain information that is incomplete or incorrect. Incorrect information can be dangerous and harmful to your health.

WVU Extension Service's Love Your Heart Movement is adapted from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute's campaign and is targeted to help West Virginians become educated and enabled to take charge of their own health.

To learn more about ways WVU Extension uses trusted research and local experts to empower citizens to improve their health, visit www.ext.wvu.edu, or contact your local office of the WVU Extension Service.

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