

Discuss Medications with Your Older Clients

Side effects, interactions, and misuse of medications can lead to major complications in older people. It is crucial to find out which prescription and over-the-counter medications older patients are using and how often. Older people often take many medications prescribed by several different doctors, such as internists, cardiologists, urologists, or rheumatologists.

Remember to ask about any alternative treatments, such as dietary supplements, complementary remedies, or teas that the patient might be using. Remind patients that it is important for you to know all the over-the-counter medicines, such as pain relievers or eye drops, they use.

Suggest that patients compile a list of their medications—prescriptions, over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, supplements, herbal medicines, topicals, liquids, injectables, and inhalants—along with how much and how frequently they take each medicine. Or, you could suggest that they bring everything with them in a bag. Find out about the patient's habits for taking each medication, and check to be sure that he or she is using it as directed.

Check to see if the patient has (or needs) a medical alert ID bracelet or necklace. There are several sources, including [MedicAlert Foundation International](#).

These are the questions I use in my PAR-Q form, which simply require my new client to answer yes or no:

- Has your doctor diagnosed a bone or joint problem, such as arthritis, that has been aggravated or made worse with exercise?
- Has your doctor diagnosed a bone or joint problem, such as arthritis, that has been aggravated or made worse with exercise?
- Do you have high blood pressure?
- Use of CPAP?
- Do you have low blood pressure?
- Do you have Diabetes Mellitus or any other metabolic condition?
- Has your doctor ever said that you have raised cholesterol (serum level 6.2 mmol/L)?
- Have you ever been diagnosed with a heart condition and advised that you should only do physical activity recommended by your doctor?
- Have you ever felt chest pain during physical activity?
- Is your doctor prescribing you drugs or medication?
- Have you ever suffered from shortness of breath at rest or with mild exertion?
- Is there any history of Coronary Heart Disease in your family?
- Do you feel faint, have spells of severe dizziness or have lost consciousness?
- Do you currently smoke?

If one or more questions are answered yes, then with the client's permission I may seek advice from their GP or other medical professional as to their suitability for starting an exercise program.

<https://journals.humankinetics.com/view/journals/japa/3/3/article-p299.xml>