

Re-cap of “Medications: Management, Interactions, & What You Should Know”

By: Amy Sobrino, MSW

Co-founder of Effingham Area Alzheimer’s Awareness

In case you missed our presentation, “Medications: Management, Interactions, and What You Should Know” presented by Pharmacist Jake Mahr this past week at the Effingham Public Library, here’s a re-cap of this very relevant topic. It is important to recognize what potential prescription drugs may be recommended for Alzheimer’s disease, as well as how to talk with your pharmacist about any vitamins, supplements, or over-the-counter medications you might be taking. As of now, there are only certain drugs that are FDA approved to treat Alzheimer’s disease. They include Donepezil (Aricept), Galantamine (Razadyne), Rivastigmine (Exelon), Memantine (Namenda), and a combination product Namzaric which is Memantine & Donepezil together. These medications are available by prescription only. There are also over-the-counter products that are often used by people experiencing cognitive changes due to Alzheimer’s disease. These include Ginkgo, Aromatherapy, and Bacopa. They are not regulated by the FDA and many do not have clear evidence to support their effect. Pharmacists are able to help check for medication interactions between prescription medications and over-the-counter medications. Our guest speaker, Pharmacist Jake Mahr recommended the medications are picked up from the same pharmacy so your pharmacist can make sure there are not any interactions between them. It is important to talk with your healthcare team about all of the medications both prescription and over-the-counter (including vitamins, supplements, etc.) you take as well as what diseases/conditions you have. As an older adult, the body can metabolize medications differently, which may cause a person to be more sensitive to some medications. Pharmacists are also able to help with improved medication adherence and management. Many may be able to provide certain packaging to help group medications together for easy administration. They are also able to recommend alternative dosage forms or long acting formulations. This can specifically help family caregivers who are helping support a loved one who is still independent enough to take their medications, but may have some challenges with setting it up themselves. Trouble with medication management and administration is a common warning sign of dementia, and should be closely monitored by family caregivers.

For more information about Memory Moment articles & Effingham Area Alzheimer’s Awareness, check out their website at www.effinghamalz.org. If you are a caregiver & have specific questions or situations you would like information on, please feel free to call Shannon Nobsch at 217-663-0010 or Amy Sobrino at 618-363-8372.