

# THE BUZZ



## SENIOR SAFETY AWARENESS

### ARTICLES

PAGE 1 .....INTRODUCING WILLIAM MILLAR  
 PAGE 1 .....FALLS AND MEDICATIONS  
 PAGE 2 .....PREVENT MEDICINE MIX UPS  
 PAGE 3 .....PROTECT AGAINST FALLS



### INTRODUCING WILLIAM MILLAR

#### William Millar, R.Ph, D.Ph.

Mr. Millar presently serves as Senior Executive Assistant to the Chairman of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation.

Prior to his present position, Mr. Millar, who is a pharmacist, served as the Special Assistant to the Chairwoman of the Board of Directors for PRxN, a mail service pharmacy serving many tribes. In this role, Mr. Millar provided counsel on Indian Health Care laws, regulations and policies that strategically placed PRxN in niche health care markets.

Mr. Millar became the first Tribal Manager for the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation in 1988 and co-founded PRxN in 1991.

Before working for the Nation, Mr. Millar served 28 years in the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS). The capstone to his service in the USPHS occurred in the Nashville area where he established 23 tribally operated clinics that currently employ over 1,000 native people, from Maine to Florida and as far West as Texas.

He was officially retired from the USPHS by U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, M.D.

.....continued next column

Prior to this, Mr. Millar USPHS service included a Pharmacy residency, work at the National Institutes of Health Cancer Institute, and 25 years with Indian Health.

Mr. Millar graduated with a BS in Pharmacy from the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy followed by short employment in community pharmacy. Mr. Millar also earned an MBA from American Graduate University and a Doctor of Pharmacy from Tennessee.

Mr. Millar has a total of 45 years healthcare experience. Mr. Millar continues to be a strong advocate for Tribal self-determination and economic development and seniors.

We are happy that Bill is willing to provide us with his considerable experience and expertise. He will guide Senior Safety Online as we build a medication safety awareness program.

Bill is very creative and, yet rigorous in his thinking. He is a welcome working partner.

### Falls and Medications

If you're 65 or older and take at least four medications a day, you're a prime candidate for a fall, the main cause of fatal and nonfatal injuries in your age group.

In fact, more than a third of adults 65 or older take a tumble each year, and a quarter of them require hospitalization as a result, researchers from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill write in the latest issue of the American Journal of Geriatric Pharmacotherapy.

And older adults who take at least four medications a day have double or triple the risk of falling as peers who don't take that many.

Most consistently, studies have identified drugs that affect the central nervous system,

.....continued top of next column

such as antidepressants, anti-seizure medications and benzodiazepine tranquilizers as associated with an increased risk of falls, write the researchers, who have developed a list of roughly 100 medications considered to be high risk.

Their advice to older patients: If you're taking a drug on the list, don't stop taking it before you talk to your doctor about a lower-risk alternative.

And remember, anything that can cause drowsiness, including over-the-counter medications, can increase your risk of falling.



The researchers are testing a program they developed to reduce medication-related falls. Half the patients in the study, all of whom had fallen at least once in the previous year, were randomly assigned to receive counseling from a pharmacy resident at their neighborhood drugstore. If the pharmacy resident sees the patient is taking medicine linked to a higher risk of falls, he or she sends a letter to that person's doctor, suggesting an alternative when possible.

### ADVERTISERS

WE WELCOME ADVERTISING IN OUR NEWSLETTER!

FOR RATES:

CALL: 888-256-0412

EMAIL REQUEST: [CONTACT US](#)

**The Buzz** - Published by Senior Safety Online

### Contact Information

Phone: 302-256-0415

email: [customerservice](#)

2136 W. 8th Street, Ste. 2, Wilmington, DE 19805



ARTICLES	
PAGE 1 .....	INTRODUCING WILLIAM MILLAR
PAGE 1 .....	FALLS AND MEDICATIONS
PAGE 2 .....	PREVENT MEDICINE MIX UPS
PAGE 3 .....	PROTECT AGAINST FALLS

**The American Pharmacists Association suggests the following to prevent medicine mix-ups:**

1. Be sure that your name is on every container of medication. If the medicine is for a child, be sure that the child's name is on the label.
2. Never take a medication out of its original container to store it.
3. Highlight the patient's name, the medication name and the expiration date (if any) with a marker so they can be easily seen. Use a different color marker for each member of the family.
4. Read the entire label every time you take medication yourself or give it to a family member.
5. If you have stopped taking a particular medicine but have some left, check with your pharmacist or doctor. Many medications should be taken until they are all gone, and having leftovers could indicate that the medication was not taken properly.
6. Properly dispose of any medicine that has not been used in six months.
7. Do not share medicines. Medication should be taken only by the patient for whom it was prescribed.
8. Keep a permanent, updated list of all medications taken by each family member as part of your family's history. Include both prescription and non-prescription medicines.

**Cooking and Safe Food Handling Practices for Seniors**

As a senior, it is even more important for you to watch what you eat and how you prepare your food. As people age, their immune systems get weaker and provide less

.....continued on page 3

**Protect Against Falls**

Did you know?

- 1/3 of Americans over age 65 fall each year
- Falls cause 90% of fractures in those over age 65
- Falls are the leading cause of injury-related death in adults over 65
- There are simple solutions that may greatly reduce the risk of a fall.

A fall can be a terrible accident for you. Older adults are more susceptible to physical and emotional damage. Whether the fall is environmental (slippery floor or steep stairs for example) or caused by weakness, these can be preventable.

**Tips**

Falls are not just the result of getting older. They're usually caused by a number of factors, most of which are avoidable. By changing some of these things, you can lower your risk of falling.

**1. Make your home safer**

Approximately 50% of all falls happen in the home. To make your home safer:

- Remove clutter and other common things that could cause you to trip (such as newspapers, books, clothes, and shoes), especially from stairs and high-traffic areas where you tend to walk most often.
- Remove small throw rugs and use double-sided tape to keep remaining rugs from slipping. This especially goes for your bathroom. Use a no-slip bath mat with a rubberized bottom on the floor. Also, use a no-slip mat in your bathtub or shower.
- Keep items in reach. Avoid having to use a chair or step stool to access items in cabinets and closets.
- Have grab bars installed next to your toilet and in the tub or shower.
- Improve the lighting in your home. As we age, we need brighter lights to see well. Lamp shades or frosted bulbs can reduce glare – this is especially important for people with glaucoma or cataracts. Put in sturdy handrails and lights on all staircases.
- Wear shoes with proper support and have thin non-slip soles. Avoid wearing slippers, athletic shoes with deep treads, and shoes with thick soles.

**2. Have your health care provider review your medicines**

Have your doctor, pharmacist, or health care worker look at all the medicines you take (including over-the-counter medications that don't require prescriptions, such as cold medicines). As you get older, the way some medicines work in your body can change. Some medicines, or combinations of medicines, can make you drowsy or light-headed which can lead to a fall. Also, most medications have a shelf life and should be thrown out after six months to a year.

**3. Have your vision checked**

The risk of falling also increases if medication levels are not correct or even if you don't have the correct prescription in your glasses.

Overall, just be aware. Bones may grow brittle as we age, but we can make up for it by using extra brain power in order to think about our surrounding and how to keep them as safe as possible.



**ARTICLES**  
PAGE 1 ..... INTRODUCING WILLIAM MILLAR  
PAGE 1 ..... FALLS AND MEDICATIONS  
PAGE 2 ..... PREVENT MEDICINE MIX UPS  
PAGE 3 ..... PROTECT AGAINST FALLS

*.....safe food handling for seniors*

protection. This places seniors at a higher risk for foodborne illness or food poisoning.

As we age, the lining in our stomachs naturally become inflamed and the amount of acid reduces. This change makes it easier for bacteria to enter the small intestine. At the same time, the digestive process slows down, creating an ideal environment for pathogens to grow. If you have undergone major surgery or are malnourished, your immune system will function even less efficiently, which gives bacteria the green light to harm you.

**Symptoms of Foodborne Illness**

You might expect to experience symptoms of food-borne illness within a few hours of eating contaminated food. But, you can also experience symptoms days, even weeks, after ingestion. You may feel sick as little as a day or two or as long as 10 days. If your health is already compromised, foodborne illness is much more dangerous for you than for the general population.



Seek treatment if you experience all or some of the following common reactions:

- Diarrhea
- Abdominal cramping
- Fever
- Blood or pus in the stools
- Headache
- Vomiting Severe exhaustion

Adopt Safe Food Practices. Handle food safely when you cook at home or bring home food from elsewhere. Awareness of the hazards of bacteria, will keep you safe. Meal is on the table, dig in.

**Seniors, the elderly and small children are susceptible to overheating and this can cause some serious health problems.**

Those with a history of stroke, heart disease, high blood pressure, kidney disease and respiratory disease need to take special care. However, overheating can happen to any one if you're not careful.

Pay attention to the symptoms of heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Some symptoms are: heavy sweating pale or clammy skin, fainting, and vomiting.

A heat stroke is a true medical emergency. A delay in treatment can be fatal. check on your friends during hot weather.

Drink lots of water and stay hydrated.

Are your feet and hands swelling? Heat edema is swelling of the hands and feet when blood vessels expand and allow fluid to pool under the skin.

Your sweat is your body's main system for getting rid of extra heat. If you do not sweat enough, you cannot get rid of extra heat well.

If you have poor circulation it is also difficult to stay cool when its hot because your body can't get rid of heat as well if blood is not flowing to the skin.

**Other Precautions**

- Increase your intake of water – avoid alcoholic, carbonated, sugar and caffeine drinks. This may sound crazy – avoid ice cold drinks. When your tummy receives fluid that is ice cold, your internal body temperature must rise in order to compensate – leading to further internal heat
- An old farmers' trick (you learn this quickly if you've ever helped to bail hay in August) Wet a bandana (or scarf) and put it in the freezer. Wrap this around your neck, once the fabric is thawed, wrap the cool scarf around your forehead. My grandma use to have a large wrap that she would position around her bust line.
- Wear clothing that is light in color and loose fitting (let your skin breathe)
- Avoid outdoor activity during the afternoon hours
- Eat less protein and more fruits and vegetables (proteins increase your metabolism which heats you up inside) this leads to further water loss. The fruits and vegetables will add minerals, water, and salts that you are loosing in your sweat.
- Treat yourself to a cool bath
- If you don't have air-conditioning, stay in the lowest section of your home if possible. Keep in mind, heat rises. If you have window fans, set the fan to pull hot air out of your home, rather than pulling more hot air in from the outdoors.

Seniors living without air conditioning may want to consider spending the hottest part of the day where relief from the heat can be found. Senior centers, the mall, libraries, churches and museums are all (almost always) air-conditioned.