

# THE BUZZ



## SENIOR SAFETY AWARENESS

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### SENIOR SAFETY ONLINE WELCOMES TWO NEW SPONSORS.

We want to introduce two new partners of Senior Safety Online: EHDOC and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan. We look forward to working with them to improve seniors' safety awareness within their communities.

#### *Elderly Housing and Development and Operations Corporation (EHDOC)*

EHDOC is a senior housing management and development corporation providing housing for low income seniors under HUD's low income housing program.

Part of EHDOC's mission can be found on its [website at www.ehdoc.com](http://www.ehdoc.com). The following is an excerpt..... "EHDOC is committed to the principal of "aging in place" - ensuring opportunities for our elders to live independently, with dignity and self determination, in community with their peers.

As a premier manager and leading advocate for quality, affordable senior housing, EHDOC is entrusted by the nation's unions and prominent charitable organizations to create and manage properties where elderly residents can enjoy peace of mind, comfort and security in states coast to coast, Washington, D.C. and Puerto Rico."

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#### *Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan (BCBSM)*

BCBSM is the premier health insurance provider for the state of Michigan. They, as well as EHDOC, are a non-profit organization. BCBSM has a strong commitment to helping not only seniors, but all the citizens of Michigan.

The following is an excerpt of BCBSM's commitment found on its web site [www.bcbsm.com](http://www.bcbsm.com)..... "Our commitment to Michigan is what differentiates us from other health insurance companies doing business here. That mission has never changed. Nearly 70 years ago, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan started with a purpose to provide people with the security of knowing they have health care when they need it. Today, that nonprofit mission is the same and we're accomplishing it in many ways, including:

- Offering access to health care coverage for everyone, regardless of circumstances
- Never dropping your coverage for health reasons
- Partnering with the state to cover more than 32,000 children through MICHild
- Providing financial support to 30 free clinics statewide
- Contributing more money than any other company to provide Michigan with better health and health care
- Advocating and educating through Alliance for Advancing Nonprofit Health Care"

We, at Senior Safety Online, feel honored to be able to work with two outstanding organizations dedicated to improving the lives of citizens in their communities.



William Fitch  
Chairman - Senior Safety Online

#### *US studies show need for caution in Rxing for seniors.....07 May 2008*

A number of new US studies have pointed up the need for extra care in medicating older people, with government figures showing that older people with disabilities are more at risk for taking "inappropriate" medicines.

33 of medicines are regarded by physicians as inappropriate for people aged 65 and over, but around 25% of US seniors with disabilities use at least one prescription drug which is inappropriate for people of their age, as do 13% of over-65s without disabilities, according to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).

These drugs - which include such widely-used products as the anxiety treatment Xanax (alprazolam) and anti-anginal Procardia (nifedipine), both made by Pfizer, and the pain relievers Darvon (propoxyphene) and Demerol (meperidine) - should not be used by

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older people because they are ineffective, pose a high risk of side effects or could be replaced by safer alternatives, says the Agency.

Meantime, researchers have reported a study showing that older seniors taking drugs for both dementia and incontinence had a 50% faster decline in function than those taking dementia drugs only.

The study, by Dr Kaycee Sink of Wake Forest University School of Medicine in North Carolina, looked at residents of nursing homes, where the two most common medical conditions, dementia and urinary incontinence, are often present in the same patient. Of the residents studied, about 10% of those being treated with cholinesterase inhibitors for dementia were also taking either Pfizer's Detrol (tolterodine) or Ortho-McNeil's Ditropan (oxybutynin), both anticholinergics and the two most commonly prescribed treatments for urinary incontinence.

It is likely that the oppositional effects of the drugs contributed to the accelerated decline in these patients, said Dr Sink, who described the findings, published on-line by the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society, as representing a major public health problem.

The results of another study by Dr Sink, presented earlier this month at the American Geriatrics Society Meeting in Washington, showed that patients being treated with anticho

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*SURGE IN ESCALATOR INJURIES AMONG ELDERLY*

Escalators have long been a safety worry for children. New research shows the escalator is increasingly a danger to the elderly as well.

Researchers from the Indiana University School of Medicine have found that escalator injuries among the elderly doubled from 1991 to 2005, according to a report published this month in the public health journal Accident Analysis and Prevention.

Nearly 40,000 older adults were injured on escalators during the time period, according to data from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. The average age of the injured was 80, and three out of four of the injured were women. Slips, trips and falls were the most common accidents and most of the time resulted only in bruises. The risk of escalator mishaps among the elderly is about eight injuries per 100,000 people. Although most accidents weren't serious, about 3,000 people were taken to the emergency room.

Notably, many of the accidents were the result of careless behavior by elderly escalator riders. One older rider fell because he tried to squeeze past a wheelchair user and an attendant, who shouldn't have been using the escalator in the first place.

"What really surprised us was the reckless behavior exhibited by some older adults on escalators," said study coauthor Greg Steele, associate professor of epidemiology. "Obviously, the wheelchair should not have been on the moving stairs. And of course the injured individual should not have attempted to beat them down the stairs."



Older adults who have difficulty walking or maintaining balance should use elevators rather than escalators, the study

authors caution. And when elderly people do ride escalators, they should use extra care when stepping on or off the moving steps.

"They should not try to walk up or down a moving escalator, carry large objects, or wear loose shoes or clothing while riding, since these appear to be associated with an increased risk of falling," said coauthor Dr. Joseph O'Neil, associate professor of clinical pediatrics.

Dr. O'Neil said injury should be viewed as a "medical illness" alongside heart disease, diabetes and stroke.

"We have to stop thinking of unexpected injuries as accidents, which implies that they are unpreventable," Dr. O'Neil said. "Escalator injuries, like auto crashes and many other so-called accidents, can be prevented."

.....NY Times

***Always do right. This will gratify some people and astonish the rest.***

.....Mark Twain



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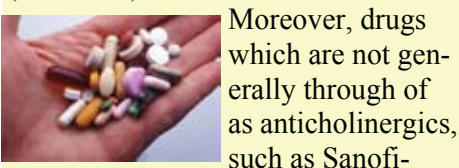
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linergic drugs walk more slowly, have worse memory functions and are less able to take care of themselves than people of the same age who are not on the drugs.

Widely-prescribed products which have mild or moderate anticholinergic properties include GlaxoSmithKline's ulcer treatment Zantac (ranitidine) and Pfizer's Procardia.



Moreover, drugs which are not generally through of as anticholinergics, such as Sanofi-

Aventis' edema treatment Lasix (furosemide) and Abbott Laboratories' blood pressure and angina treatment Cardizem (diltiazem) can also, when taken together, hasten functional and cognitive declines by an average of three to four years, the study found.

In April, case findings presented to the American Academy of Neurology by Dr Jack Tsao of the US Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) showed that, among a group of people with an average age of 75, the cognitive function in those who took anticholinergic drugs declined 1.5 times as fast as in those who did not.

..... NY Times

**It is so important to consult with your Pharmacist and Doctor about your medications!**

Senior Safety Online has worksheets for organizing prescriptions on its website. They can be found by [clicking here](#).

### First Aid Kits

In spite of our best intentions accidents do happen. It is very important to be prepared.

A well-stocked first-aid kit, kept within easy reach, is a necessity in every home. Having supplies gathered ahead of time will help you handle an emergency at a moment's notice

You should keep one first-aid kit in your home and one in each car. Also be sure to bring a first-aid kit on family vacations.

Choose containers for your kits that are roomy, durable, easy to carry, and simple to open. Plastic tackle boxes or containers for storing art supplies are ideal, since they're lightweight, have handles, and offer a lot of space.

Include the following in each of your first-aid kits:

- first-aid manual
- sterile gauze
- adhesive tape
- adhesive bandages in several sizes elastic bandage
- antiseptic wipes
- soap
- antibiotic cream (triple-antibiotic ointment)
- antiseptic solution (like hydrogen peroxide)
- hydrocortisone cream (1%)
- acetaminophen and ibuprofen
- extra prescription medications (if you are going on vacation)
- tweezers
- sharp scissors
- safety pins
- disposable instant cold packs
- calamine lotion
- alcohol wipes or ethyl alcohol
- thermometer
- plastic gloves (at least 2 pairs)
- flashlight and extra batteries
- mouthpiece for administering CPR (can be obtained from your local Red Cross)
- your list of emergency phone numbers
- blanket (stored nearby)



After you've stocked your first-aid kits:

- Read the entire first-aid manual so you'll understand how to use the contents of your kits.
- Store first-aid kits in places that are easily accessible.
- Check the kits regularly. Replace missing items or medicines that may have expired.

**Preparedness is half the battle!**

**MORALITY, LIKE ART, MEANS DRAWING A LINE SOMEPLACE.**

..... OSCAR WILDE