

Communications Toolkit for Talk About Your Medicines Month

Our 2017 Theme: **Think Before You Drink -- *sometimes*, alcohol and medicines don't mix**

Working Together to Increase Understanding of Potential Risks of Combining Alcohol and Medications

October marks NCPIE's 32nd [Talk About Your Medicines Month](#). TAYMM is an annual opportunity to focus attention on the value that better medicine communication can play in promoting better medicine use and better health outcomes. Over time, TAYMM has grown and expanded to stimulate conversations between consumers and their healthcare providers about all the types of medicines they may take, with a focus on what to know and what to do in terms of expected health outcomes, side effects, benefits and potential risks.

The 2017 TAYMM is focused on avoiding potential risks of combining alcohol and medications -- a compelling health and safety issue. Our theme is **Think Before You Drink -- *sometimes*, alcohol and medicines don't mix**. Whether you are a baby boomer (adults ages 51-69), an older adult, a healthcare provider, or a caregiver, being aware of the potential for dangerous interactions between prescription medications and alcohol can help you prevent them. Aging can increase sensitivity to the effects of medication and lower tolerance to alcohol. Today, one in three Americans is 50 or older - 45 percent of the U.S. population. By 2029, all the baby boomers will be 65 years and older. The good news -- there are steps everyone can take to prevent alcohol and medicine interactions.

The objective of any communication between patients and their healthcare providers is to improve the patient's health and medical care. Good communication is at the heart of good medicine. [Data](#) show that patients reporting good communication with their healthcare providers are more likely to be satisfied with their care, follow advice and adhere to the prescribed treatment. Of course, communication is a two-way street. Consumers need to be aware of the questions to ask, and healthcare providers in turn must be able to share medical information in a meaningful way that their patients are able to understand and act on. To that end, **Talk About Your Medicines Month** empowers both.

Whether you are a consumer health organization, medical society or clinical organization, we encourage you to use this **Talk About Your Medicines Month communications toolkit** to educate and help encourage and stimulate safe medicine use conversations. The toolkit includes traditional and social media messages and an accompanying graphic to customize and share to educate your own members, constituents and audiences about TAYMM and to stimulate conversations about understanding the potential risks of interactions between prescription medications and alcohol.

We hope you can use these in your own communication channels to help stimulate education and conversations throughout **Talk About Your Medicines Month** this October and beyond. Please visit the [TAYMM page](#) for additional information and resources on www.BeMedWise.org. Please let NCPIE know if you were able to share TAYMM information with your members and stakeholder networks. Thank you for your engagement.

Many thanks,

Deborah Davidson, Senior Director, Member Relations and Special Projects ddavidson@ncpie.info

Communications Toolkit: Talk About Your Medicines Month - Think Before You Drink--*sometimes*, alcohol and medicines don't mix.

“Blurb” for e-newsletters:

October marks the 32nd [Talk About Your Medicines Month](#), an annual opportunity to focus attention on the value that enhanced provider-patient communication about medicines can play in promoting safe and appropriate medicine use and improved health outcomes. Of course, communication is a two-way street. Consumers benefit from being proactive in asking questions and seeking information about their medicines; and healthcare providers in turn must be able to share medical information in a meaningful way that their patients are able to understand and act on. Visit [Talk About Your Medicines](#) Month to access tools and resources to stimulate conversations focused on Talk About Your Medicines Month’s theme: **Think Before You Drink--*sometimes*, alcohol and medicines don't mix.**

Aging + Alcohol + Prescription medications = Health risk

Help raise awareness about the age-related risks of taking prescription medication and drinking alcohol. Spread the word about the need to read prescription medication labels and accompanying information for this important warning: *“Do Not Use with Alcohol.”* Drinking alcohol when you are taking a prescription medication is a health risk with far-reaching effects for aging adults. **Think Before You Drink -- *sometimes*, alcohol and medicines don't mix**, is a reminder to learn more about this health risk and how to prevent it. Consider these facts associated with aging, prescription medication use, and alcohol consumption:

- Today, one in three Americans is 50 or older. By 2029, all the baby boomers will be 65 years and older.
- People age 65 and older buy more than 30 percent of all prescription medications.
- The National Survey on Drug Use and Health found that nearly 40 percent of adults age 65 and older drink alcohol.
- Older adults are more likely to take multiple medications for age-related long-term or chronic health conditions.
- Older adults often use more than one healthcare provider who prescribes medications, which can increase the risk for medication interactions, misuse, or abuse.
- Aging can increase sensitivity to the effects of medication and lower tolerance to alcohol.
- Alcohol interacts with more than 150 medications and can cause them not to work effectively—their effects may become weaker, stronger, toxic, or have no benefit.
- Medication lasts in the body for at least several hours so it’s never safe to drink alcohol after taking a prescription medication earlier in the day.

Visit [Talk About Your Medicines](#) Month for tips and resources for patients, healthcare providers and caregivers to help prevent medication interactions and for a printable “Facts to Know about Aging, Alcohol, and Prescription Medications.”

Graphic to share (JPEG attached)



Suggested social media posts, to customize for your members & audiences:

Help Educate & Share Via Social Media: TAYMM & Think Before You Drink	
<p>Facebook: General Audience</p>	<p>Baby-Boomers (adults ages 51-69) Urged to Think Before You Drink--<i>sometimes</i>, alcohol and medicines don't mix. October is Talk About Your Medicines Month (TAYMM), an annual opportunity to focus attention on the value that patient-provider communications can play in promoting safe medicine use and better health outcomes. For 2017, TAYMM is focused on age-related health risks associated with taking prescription medications and drinking alcohol. Medication lingers in your body for at least several hours after taking it. It's not safe to drink at all if you are taking a prescription medication known to interact with alcohol. Learn about the medications that can interact and cause dangerous side effects when used with alcohol. Visit: http://bit.ly/TAYMM17 [Share jpeg image]</p> <p>Know Your Risks: More than 150 Medications Interact with Alcohol Many prescription medications interact with alcohol. Prescription medications also may not work as intended when combined with alcohol, or may not work at all. Be safe with your prescription medications. October is Talk About Your Medicines Month – a good time to learn tips to prevent and manage health risks associated with taking prescription medications and drinking alcohol. Learn about the medications that can interact and cause dangerous side effects when used with alcohol. Learn more: http://bit.ly/TAYMM17 [Share jpeg image]</p>
<p>Facebook: HCP Audience</p>	<p>Talk to Your Baby-Boomer Patients about Alcohol and Prescription Medications Help your baby-boomer patients (adults ages 51-69) understand the dangers of using alcohol if they are taking prescription medications. They may not realize that their bodies now may react differently to this dangerous combination than when they were younger. October is Talk About Your Medicines Month. Make sure your patients are well informed about the medicines they take, and drug interactions/side effects they should be on the lookout for – and avoid. Learn about the medications that can interact and cause dangerous side effects when used with alcohol. Visit: http://bit.ly/TAYMM17 [Share jpeg image]</p>

<p>Facebook: HCP Audience</p>	<p>Medication Safety Begins with Reading the Label Many patients and caregivers are not aware of any safety warnings about their medicines. Regularly review all medications with your patients and instruct them about medication safety. October is Talk About Your Medicines Month. Make sure your patients are well informed about the medicines they take, and drug interactions/side effects they should be on the lookout for including sensitivities to the effects of medication and lower tolerance to alcohol. They can learn more about the important topic of reducing risks from alcohol and prescription medication interactions here: http://bit.ly/TAYMM17 [Share jpeg image]</p>
<p>Facebook: Consumer Education</p>	<p>October is Talk About Your Medicines Month. Here are 6 Tips for Managing Your Prescription Medications Safely 1. Ask your healthcare professional if your medication(s) interact with alcohol and 2. What foods, drinks, other medicines, over-the-counter, dietary supplements, or activities (driving, exercise) should I avoid while taking this medicine? 3. Read and follow all instructions on your medication’s label 4. Follow instructions provided by your healthcare professional about your medication 5. Report any side effects from your medication to your healthcare professional 6. Don’t stop taking your medication unless your healthcare professional says to stop. Learn about the medications that can interact and cause dangerous side effects when used with alcohol: http://bit.ly/TAYMM17 [Share jpeg image]</p>
<p>Twitter: Post with graphic</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aging can make you more sensitive to medication and can lower your tolerance to alcohol http://bit.ly/TAYMM17 #TAYMM [upload jpeg image] • Think Before You Drink - is a reminder to read your prescription medication labels for a “Do Not Use With Alcohol” http://bit.ly/TAYMM17 #TAYMM • Alcohol and prescription medications don’t mix no matter what your age http://bit.ly/TAYMM17 #TAYMM • Some bottles don’t mix. Don’t drink alcohol when you take prescription medications • http://bit.ly/TAYMM17 #TAYMM • Over 50? Learn about health risks associated with aging, prescription medications, and alcohol http://bit.ly/TAYMM17 #TAYMM