

Women's Club

By Michelle Powers

Do you take medication for high blood pressure or atrial fibrillation; antihistamines for allergies, hives or eczema; or anti-parkinsonian drugs? Anti-spasmodic medications? Antithrombotics to prevent blood clots? What about anti-infective drugs such as antibiotics or antiviral medications? Do you take alpha-blockers, drugs for depression or barbiturates? Drugs for conditions affecting hormone levels such as androgens, estrogen or progestin? Do you need medications for gastrointestinal problems? Or NSAIDS (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as aspirin, ibuprofen, meloxicam and others) commonly prescribed as pain relievers? Drugs for chronic constipation or urinary incontinence? Are you over the age of 65?

If the daunting list above resonates with you and you are over 65, it would be prudent for you to talk to your doctor about the side effects associated with these drugs. According to the American Geriatrics Society (AGS), every year one in three adults over the age of 65 has one or more adverse reactions to a medication or medications prescribed for a health problem—and often it is a drug that he or she has used successfully for years. As we age, our bodies change and so does our reaction to many drugs.

Dr. Michael Soucie, Director for Clinical Support Services and Director of Pharmacy at Carteret Health Care (CHC), and graduate resident Dr. Lindsey Arthur spoke to the Pine Knoll Shores Women's Club at its first meeting of the year. Their talk focused on the importance of being "a member of your own health care team." It is vitally important, Dr. Arthur said, that we all keep a regularly updated record of all medications we take, including prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, vitamins and herbal supplements, eye and ear drops, creams and inhalers, and to share that information with all health care providers and family to lessen the incidence of adverse drug interactions.



Dr. Michael Soucie (left) and Dr. Lindsey Arthur from Carteret Health Care address the Pine Knoll Shores Women's Club on medication side effects.—Photo by Carroll Beckham

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Dr. Soucie comes to CHC with over 35 years of expertise in pharmacy, laboratory, radiology and cardiopulmonary services. Dr. Arthur's role as a pharmacy resident includes standard pharmacy duties, plus research and education to enhance clinical knowledge. They encouraged the club's members to review the 2012 updated "Beers Criteria for Potentially Inappropriate Medication Use in Older Adults" to determine if any of the drugs they are currently taking are on the list. If so, they advised members to consult with their physician about the risks and adverse reactions that may affect those over 65 taking those medications. The complete Beers Criteria list is published by the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* and can be found online at americangeriatrics.org.

The Beers Criteria list was developed following an expert panel's review of over 2,000 high-quality research studies about medications prescribed for older adults—and it is updated periodically. The speakers cautioned the audience not to stop taking a drug because it is on the list, but rather speak to their health care provider about concerns and discuss options for treatment. They advised club members to take control of their health with this simple step and avoid potentially harmful side effects of medications.

Following the presentation, President Pegge Knecht conducted a short business meeting focusing on the plans for the club-sponsored fashion show planned for February 24 at The Country Club of the Crystal Coast to benefit local charities. The next meeting of the Women's Club will be March 24 at the Pine Knoll Shores town hall, beginning at 9:30 a.m.