

Lifestyles

Incorrect use of medicines can be problem for elderly

Most people, and especially the elderly, use medicines at some point during their lifetime. When used correctly, medicines can be of great value. They can help heal wounds, stop the spread of infections, bring on sleep, and ease pain, both physical and mental. But when used incorrectly, drugs have the ability to injure the patient or change the effects of other medicines being taken at the same time.

In general, drugs given to older people act differently than they do when given to young or middle-aged people. This is probably the result of the normal changes in body makeup that occur with age. For example, as the body grows older, the percent of water and lean tissue (mainly muscle) decreases, while the percent of fat tissue increases. These changes can affect the length of time a drug stays in the body, how a drug will act in the body, and the amount of drug absorbed by body tissues.

The kidneys and the liver are two important organs responsible

On the Front Burner
Alice Pettitt
Home Economics Agent



for breaking down and removing most drugs from the body. With age, the kidneys and the liver often begin to function less efficiently, and thus drugs leave the body more slowly. This may account for the fact that older people tend to have more undesirable reactions to drugs than do younger people.

By taking an active part in learning about the drugs you take and their possible side effects, you can help bring about safer and faster treatment results. Some basic rules for safe drug use are as follows:

- Take exactly the amount of drug prescribed by your doctor and follow the dosage schedule as closely as possible.

- Medicines do not produce the same effects in all people. For this reason, you should never take

drugs prescribed for a friend or relative, even though your symptoms may be the same.

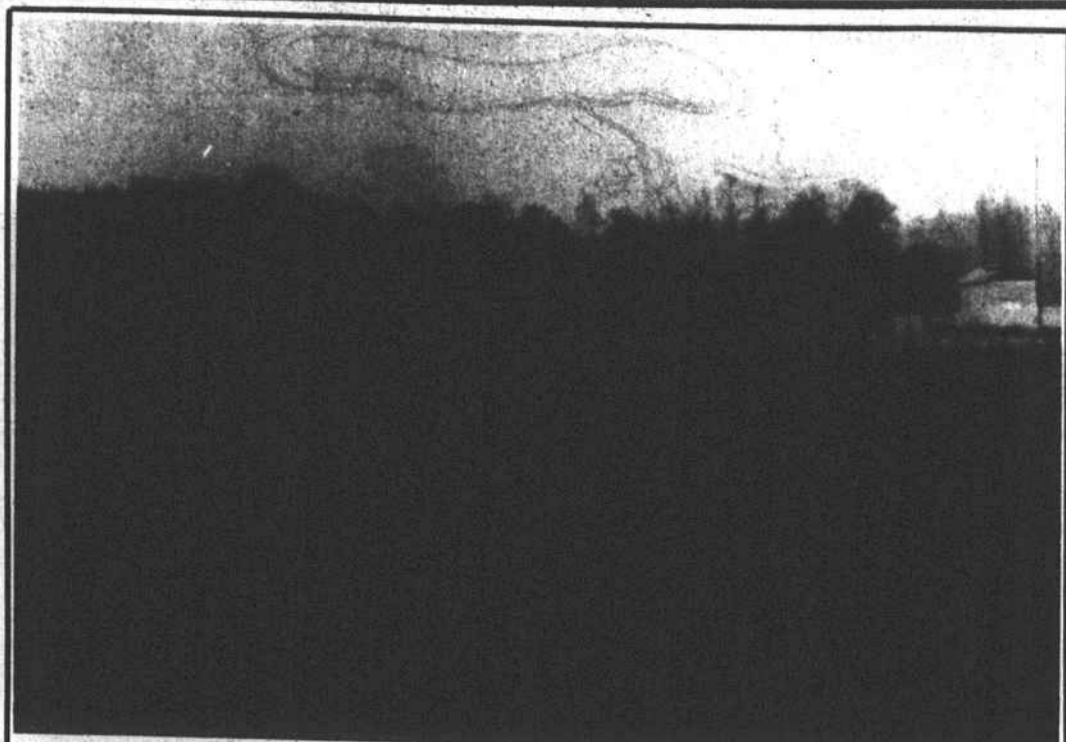
- Always tell your doctor about past problems you had with drugs, and be sure to mention other drugs (including over-the-counter medicines) you are taking.

- It may help to keep a daily record of the drugs you are taking, especially if your treatment schedule is complicated or you are taking more than one drug at a time.

- If child-proof containers are hard for you to handle, ask your pharmacist for easy-to-open containers. Always be sure, however, that such containers are out of the reach of children.

- Make sure that you understand the directions printed on the drug container and that the name of the medicine is clearly printed. This will help you to avoid taking the wrong medicine or following the wrong schedule. Ask your pharmacist to use large type on the label if you find the regular labels hard to read.

(See FRONT BURNER, page 5B)



Waiting for harvest

With the cold wet weather Hoke County has been receiving this winter, heated tobacco barns might offer welcomed shelter. These barns are, however, cold and perhaps waiting for another harvest.

Tobacco was still this county's largest field crop for 1984, but the program is under fire from Congress, and the 1985 season is in doubt for some local farmers.

Farmers need eye on tobacco regs

Hoke County farmers who intend to import tobacco transplants for the 1985 growing season should be aware of the tobacco plant import regulations and understand their real intent, said state Agriculture Commissioner Jim Graham.

Under the existing regulations, tobacco farmers who plan to obtain plants from sources outside of North Carolina are required to first obtain a permit. The regulation, administered by the N.C. Department of Agriculture's Plant Industry Division, was designed to ensure farmers that plants from other states are as free as possible from insects and injurious diseases.

"Under the import system, plants must be certified in the state of origin to meet North Carolina requirements," said Graham. "However, the tobacco plant regulation does not contain standards as to size and color of transplants. It's up to the buyer to determine that plants are the size and color he wants before he purchases them."

Graham suggested that buyers having questions concerning the correct count on tobacco plants as represented on the crates or invoice call or write the Standards Division, North Carolina Department of Agriculture, Raleigh, NC 27611, (919) 733-3313.

Extension News
Willie Featherstone Jr.
County Extension Chairman



According to Graham, the North Carolina tobacco grower lists on an application the name of his out-of-state transplant source. NCDA's Plant Protection Section then checks to see if the transplant producer is under an inspection program in that state and can meet North Carolina's standards. If so, the application is signed and returned to the applicant. Then it becomes his permit to move the plants into North Carolina.

As part of the certification process, proper land fumigation is required. This lessens the chance of nematode and soil-borne disease problems like Fusarium wilt, Granville wilt, and black shank.

"Preventive sprays for blue mold are also required," the commissioner said. "Uncertified, non-permit plants brought in and infected with blue mold or viruses could cause problem for not only the grower, but also his neighbors and potentially, the entire production area."

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