

Prescription Medications Keep Older Adults Healthier, Independent

Prescription medications and over-the-counter drugs (OTC) help keep older adults healthier and more independent. But these preparations may be dangerous when used improperly or when mixed with other medications.

There are now powerful new non-prescription drugs available as a result of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) reclassification of prescription medications for over-the-counter sales. While most people assume over-the-counter products are milder or less effective than prescription medications, they may be just as potent. Some examples are cold remedies, antihistamines, the pain reliever ibuprofen, hydrocortisone for allergic

rashes and insect bites, and miconazole used for fungal infections.

These and other drugs may have dangerous interactions when combined with blood pressure medications and antidepressants. Some also react negatively when mixed with alcohol, aspirin, blood thinners and diuretics. Many drug labels warn against using the product if a person has glaucoma, diabetes, high blood pressure, or thyroid disease. It is always wise to read the labels or consult your physician before using any medications or over-the-counter drugs.

For example, aspirin, the most commonly used drug by those over age of 65, is considered harmless, yet aspirin can lower the level of

vitamin C in the platelets, which may cause the blood to clot. Therefore, some people may need vitamin C supplements, but the combination of vitamin C and aspirin can irritate the intestine and result in bleeding and a loss of iron.

In addition, many drugs have a potential for food and nutrition side effects, such as decreased appetite, nausea, an unpleasant sense of taste, dry mouth, and vomiting. Drugs and medications can interact with food and nutrients to reduce absorption and alter their distribution in the body.

Foods also contain natural and added chemicals that can react to make certain drugs virtually useless. Normally, food and beverages

interfere with the absorption of drugs and medications. For example, calcium in milk, cheese, and yogurt reduces absorption of tetracycline. On the other hand, taking certain iron supplements along with citrus fruits or juices which contain ascorbic acid increases absorption of the iron.

A number of other points should be kept in mind. It is unwise to take drug products when drinking soft drinks or acidic fruit or vegetable juices. Foods high in vitamin K, such as liver and leafy green vegetables may hinder the effect of anti-coagulants; and there is a dangerous food-drug interaction between medications often prescribed for depression and high blood pres-

sure and foods such as aged cheese, Chianti wine, and chicken livers.

The elderly are vulnerable because they use more medications than any other age group. The average healthy older citizen takes at least 11 different prescription medicines in a year, and while comprising only 11 percent of the population, the elderly use 25 percent of all prescription medicines.

The Division of Aging is aware of the serious problems caused by over-medication, combining medications and drugs, and the need for balancing nutrition and exercise. The Division recently produced a brochure called "You and Your Medications, Do's and Don'ts."

Ann "Beth" Valentine Named "Cherry Blossom" Princess

Special To The Post
Washington, D.C. -- Anna Elizabeth (Beth) Valentine, daughter of Congressman Tim Valentine and the late Mrs. Valentine of Nashville, has been chosen by the North Carolina State Society of Washington to represent North Carolina as its Cherry Blossom Princess in the 1985 Cherry Blossom Festival in Washington, D.C.

North Carolina's coronation ball will be held March 30 at the Kenwood Country Club in Bethesda, Maryland where Miss Valentine will be crowned princess by the Honorable L.H. Fountain of Tarboro.

A graduate of Northern Nash Senior High School, Miss Valentine is now in her sophomore year at Peace College in Raleigh. In the fall, she will continue her education at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. She has studied abroad with the American Institute of Foreign Studies, spending time in Switzerland, Paris and on the French Riviera. In September she was presented at the North Carolina Debutante Ball in Raleigh.

Miss Valentine is a member of the Nashville Baptist Church where she has been active in the Youth Choir and the Baptist Youth Group.

The 1985 North Carolina Cherry Blossom Court will also include: Kimberly Babb, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Wayne Babb of Jacksonville and Springfield, Virginia; Jennifer Barton, daughter of Richard Barton of Avon and Arlington, Virginia; Jennifer Bessom, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Hamilton of Warrenton and McLean, Virginia; Cheryl Chapman, daughter of William Chapman of Taylorsville and Sterling, Virginia; Cathryn Clapper, daughter of Peggy Clapper of Greensboro and Arlington, Virginia; Patricia Frazier of Oxford and Richmond, Virginia; Phyllis Jones, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jimmie Jones of Cary, Raleigh and Woodbridge, Virginia; and Cheryl Petty, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Petty, Jr. of Charlotte and Rockville, Maryland.

NorthPark Park

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nority sub-contractors, particularly in the areas of concrete work, plastering, masonry, and cleaning. He also comments that the proposed location of NorthPark would stimulate "natural opportunities" in the way of employment and growth for the area. Klein is quoted as saying, "It will open up a new area and, I think, change the way people perceive of that part of town."

That remains to be seen. At this point, residents of the communities surrounding the site in question want to meet with representatives of Trammell Crow before the Planning Commission makes its recommendation. If residents' questions and concerns can be answered satisfactorily, and if the proposal is approved, perhaps Klein will be right and the kind of development that has taken place elsewhere in the Charlotte area will also transform the north and northwest sections of town.

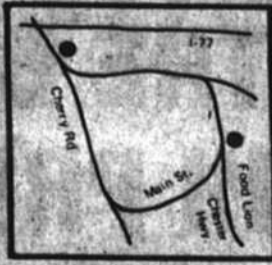
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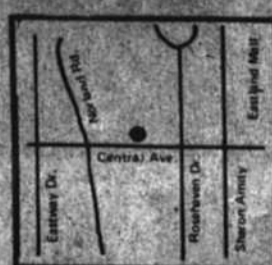
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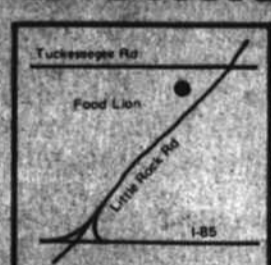
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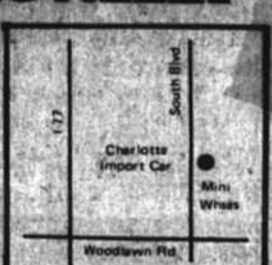
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