



# Harris County Hospital District

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## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Do You Know Your Meds? Keeping a List Proves Helpful**

HOUSTON (April 10, 2007) – You take the pinkish square pill in the morning, half of the yellow pill at noon – with food – and the round pill at night. It’s great that you know the shapes and colors of your medication, but do you know their names, the doses you take, and why you take them?

Doctors advise people to learn about their medications, as the knowledge could save lives.

“Every patient has his or her own individual medical profile,” said Carl Smith, pharmacy supervisor at the Harris County Hospital District’s Gulfgate Health Center. “When patients don’t know the basic information about their medications, it could delay their treatment if they have to go to the emergency room or see another physician.”

People who don’t know what medications they are on can’t fully inform medical staff, who in turn may prescribe something that may interact with other medications the patient takes.

“Some medications could change the way each works and either increase or decrease the effects of those medications,” said Dr. Blanca Fernandez-Kline, physician at Gulfgate Health Center and assistant professor of Family and Community Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine. “Furthermore, there are some medications that may need to be avoided in certain medical conditions.”

In an emergency situation, you may not be able to communicate with medical staff or have difficulty recalling your medication. That’s why it’s a good idea to carry a complete list with you.

“The list will help provide important information to the medical team and enhance the patient’s medical care when time is crucial,” Smith said.

The medication list should include the name of the medicines, doses, and reason for use. Also remember to list any over-the-counter medicines, herbs, vitamins and supplements you use. By doing this, medical staff can spot potential problems, such as a harmful combination of drugs.

“Medical personnel can get a lot of information about a patient’s medical condition just by knowing what medications they are taking,” Fernandez-Kline said.

It’s also important to take your medications to every doctor’s appointment. And when you get a new prescription, make sure to update your medication list.

The Harris County Hospital District is the public health care system for the nation's third most-populous county. It provides more than 1.1 million health care visits each year to uninsured and underinsured residents of Harris County. The hospital district operates Ben Taub General Hospital, Lyndon B. Johnson General Hospital, Quentin Mease Community Hospital, 12 community health centers, a dental center, eight school-based clinics, 13 homeless shelter clinics and four mobile health units.

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