

Medication Management Note Page - Answer Key

1. What is polypharmacy?

The use of multiple medications per day (generally 5 or more)

2. What are two common conditions of aging that make it difficult to manage medication usage?

Poor manual dexterity and poor vision

3. What percentage of geriatric patients who take five or more medications experience an adverse drug reaction? **35%**

4. Geriatric patients over the age of 65 have a **4** times greater chance of being hospitalized for a medication mishap than those under age 65.

5. Symptoms of polypharmacy may include:

- **Fatigue, sleepiness or decreased alertness**
- **Constipation, diarrhea or incontinence**
- **Loss of appetite**
- **Confusion**
- **Falls**
- **Weakness**
- **Tremors**
- **Hallucinations**
- **Anxiety or excitability**
- **Dizziness**
- **Depression**

6. The U.S. Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services estimates the annual cost of polypharmacy to be over **\$50 billion dollars**.

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Answers will vary.

	Strategies for Assisting with Geriatric Medication Management
Medication Reconciliation	• <u>Keep a current list of all medications</u> • <u>Review all medications with your physician</u> • <u>Ask for a screening of adverse drug reactions</u>
Medication Procurement	• <u>Assess the patient's ability to procure medications</u> • <u>Assist with identifying a way to procure medications</u> • <u>Refer to social worker if funds are a problem, or consider the use of generic equivalents</u>
Medication Knowledge	• <u>Access the patient's understanding of dosage, frequency, special instructions and side effects</u> • <u>Implement interventions including written instructions in large print, list format, schedules or charts, etc.</u>
Physical Ability	• <u>Assess for manual dexterity or visual impairment</u> • <u>Use a pill box or easy to open container</u> • <u>Make use of a medication calendar</u> • <u>Use non-childproof containers</u> • <u>Consult with the pharmacist if tablet breaking is difficult for your patient</u>
Cognitive Capacity	• <u>Determine the patient's cognitive ability to organize and remember medication</u> • <u>Use memory cues – same 'clock time', meal time, daily ritual, etc.</u> • <u>Use memory-enhancing methods such as med chart, electronic reminder, voice message, pill box, electronic dispensing device</u>
Intentional Nonadherence	• <u>Assess the reason for nonadherence</u> • <u>Educate patient on the risks of missing medication</u> • <u>Provide positive reinforcement</u>
Ongoing Monitoring	• <u>Monitor adherence if possible – over and under adherence</u> • <u>Monitor side effects</u> • <u>Notify the prescribing provider if signs and symptoms of the condition remain, or for any present side effects</u>