

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

Since January, millions of seniors have enrolled in the new Medicare Part D prescription drug benefit plan.

There could be news for many of the more than 43 million Americans who suffer with arthritis.

However, the task of choosing a plan may seem daunting and can often be confusing for seniors even after they have enrolled.

The decision to participate is important, and careful consideration is vital to ensure a plan is chosen that best meets a customer's needs. To get help in finding the right plan, seniors and caregivers may want to consult their local pharmacists, who are the most accessible members of the health care delivery system. Many pharmacists are specifically trained on how to explain the Medicare Part D drug benefit to their customers and can help guide seniors through the process.

"Over the last several months, we have assisted many customers to help them better understand their choices under the Medicare Part D drug benefit. We will continue our efforts to help customers work their way through the large number of choices available to them," said Matt Leonard, Senior Vice President of Pharmacy at CVS/pharmacy. "One of the most impor-

tant steps when choosing a plan is to ensure current prescription drugs are covered, and your local pharmacist is a great resource for that."

Because health needs can change quickly, a Medicare Part D plan may be appropriate even if a customer's costs and number of prescriptions are currently low. Once a decision has been made to enroll in a particular plan, the following facts should be taken into consideration to ensure a smooth process:

- Customers who enroll in a plan after the May 15, 2006, deadline will pay higher premiums, and their next opportunity to enroll will not be until November 15, 2006.

- Submit your enrollment application to the insurance plan of your choice as early in the month as possible. That way, there is enough time to mail out your new Medicare Prescription Drug Card and enter you into the system before your coverage begins on the first day of the following month.

- When first utilizing your new Medicare Prescription

Drug Card, order your prescription refill while you still have a few days' supply remaining. This will ensure that you do not run out of your medication if your pharmacist needs time to research and resolve any issues pertaining to your new Medicare coverage.

Medicare Part D can greatly benefit seniors who take the time to make an informed decision. In addition to personalized assistance from a pharmacist, Medicare Information Centers are available in all CVS/pharmacy stores. The Centers explain how Medicare drug plans will work and assist customers in selecting a plan that best meets their needs. These resources are also available online at www.cvs.com/medicare.

Older Americans may save money on prescription drugs if they enroll in the new Medicare Part D.

■ NAPSI

FAMILY HEALTH

Warm Weather Family Skin Care

Winter's not the only time to pay attention to your family's skin health.

Sun, chlorine and even air-conditioning can deplete skin's natural moisture, leaving it feeling dry and uncomfortable. Deborah S. Sarnoff, M.D., New York City Cosmetic Dermatologist and Associate Clinical Professor of Dermatology, NYU School of Medicine, offers these tips to help families keep the "itchies" at bay:

- In the Pool—According to recent studies, swimming in chlorinated or sea water causes a 20 percent reduction in skin hydration, which can lead to dry and itchy skin. Worse, the uncomfortable feeling can last up to four hours after swimming. Eucerin Calming Creme, which is formulated with oatmeal, is used for treating itchy, dry, post-pool skin. It's clinically proven to moisturize for 24 hours,

HEALTHY IDEAS

Digestive Disorders, Safer Alternatives

Friendly bacteria has been shown to control the gastrointestinal symptoms associated with IBS and Crohn's.

There's encouraging news for people who suffer from Crohn's and Irritable Bowel Syndrome. Recent double-blind, placebo-controlled studies show that there are effective drug-free alternatives to aggressive prescription treatments, which are costly and may have dangerous side effects.

Those alternatives resulted in a significant reduction in abdominal pain and

meaning no matter how many dips you take in the pool, your skin will feel hydrated and healthy.

- In the Bath—Women who shave their legs can calm after-shave irritation and dryness with a thick moisturizer containing glycerin. Dr. Sarnoff recommends applying a moisturizer immediately after a shower or bath to lock moisture into the skin. If skin is especially irritated, apply a soothing ointment, such as Aquaphor, to the affected area.

- In The House—Air-conditioning can zap moisture from the air in your home and from your skin. Keep effective hand and body moisturizers in the house for those dry-skin moments, and consider investing in a humidifier for your home.

- For Him—Men often take off their shirts in the hot weather, which can lead to drier skin. When the temperature rises, dermatologists advise heavier, "greasier" moisturizers such as creams and ointments because these are more effective at holding moisture in skin and helping heal dry areas.

- For The Kids—Moisturizer is a summer camp essential. Pediatricians recommend using moisturizers that contain oatmeal to calm the dry-skin itch, and which are also nonirritating, so they're safe for children with sensitive skin and eczema.

Moisturizer can be especially important for kids' skin during warm months.

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bloating in 57 percent of IBS patients in one study. In another clinical trial, four out of five patients suffering from Crohn's disease were able to stop taking their diarrhea medications for the trial's duration.

Digestive Advantage products from Ganeden Biotech have been shown to help control the symptoms of these two debilitating conditions. Ganeden invested

heavily in a research and development effort to analyze virtually every strain of lactobacillus, a lactic-acid-producing bacteria known to help maintain proper gastrointestinal function. The products contain a patented strain of lactobacillus. For a free sample, call Ganeden at (800) 456-0276 or visit www.ganedenbiotech.com.

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