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## Are You Managing Several Chronic Conditions?

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may need to ask to have a consultation with a pharmacist who specializes in giving discussions for these types of conditions.

5) If you feel overwhelmed with all the treatments or care needed, tell your primary medical provider. He or she might help you prioritize what is most important, and can refer you to a professional care manager/aging life care expert who could help you set up systems that support your quality of life and reduce your worry and anxiety.

6) If you get conflicting advice, don't try to figure it out on your own. Make an appointment or call your primary care physician immediately.

Time management is a major challenge for those caring for someone with multiple conditions, especially when dealing with a life that seems to revolve around medical appointments, treatments and medication regimes. This becomes exhausting for both the family caregiver and the patient and it starts to color life with a dark crayon. It looks like every day is focused on the health aspect of life and the other parts are out of balance - things such as the beauty of nature, family relationships, spiritual growth, hobbies, being able to do things for others, seeing friends, and other important aspects of life.

Managing a number of medical conditions is a challenge for the patient and the family. In a recent article in The Wall Street Journal, John Piette, Ph. D., who researches chronic-disease management at the University of Michigan, said: "Sometimes different doctors give patients conflicting information and advice."

Medication management and problems with interactions could be a serious issue. Piette suggests that patients (or family caregivers and professional care managers) write down as much information as possible at every appointment and then encourage the patient to get the doctors to talk to one another.

Here are six tips to assist those with multiple chronic conditions:

1) Choose one health care provider to be your primary doctor and be sure the doctor is updated on all visits, medications, treatments and test results of each condition for which you see other doctors.

2) Write up your health history and keep it updated - it might be dates of surgeries, tests, diagnosis, medications, etc. Be sure to have a section on allergic reactions to medications, foods or environmental irritants.

3) Keep an organized list of current medications and bring it to every doctor visit. Don't depend on them to have updated your records when another specialist might have changed a dosage or a drug.

4) When given any new drug, be sure to alert the prescribing doctor to other medications. You

I suggest that every day you have a task, such as an appointment or medical procedure, you also put on that day's calendar one "joyful" activity. For instance, after the appointment, bring a bag lunch and sit in the park watching the birds, or go get a massage - both for the patient and the caregiver family member. You name the activity that adds to the quality of your life and be sure to weave it into those busy days that become overly focused on the health of another.

If you are struggling with this issue or want to improve the life of someone close to you, give us a call and ask for a consultation with a professional care manager/aging life care expert or if your family member is out of the area we can find someone for you anywhere in the country.

Reach the reporter at: [info@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:info@lamorindaweekly.com)

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