

# PRECISION POST

**W**hether you're retired, unable to work, or are staying home to raise a family, there may be times when you feel you should be doing something—but you don't know what. Some people in that situation take part-time jobs or get involved with a particular hobby or past time. Others use their time to volunteer in their community.

According to information published by the United States Department of Labor, between September 2006 and September 2007, almost 70 million people in the United States volunteered through or for some sort of organization. Although that sounds like a lot of people, it's actually a decrease of 0.5% from the year before. And that year, the number had declined 2.1% from the year before that.

When people think of volunteer work, they may think of the mother who volunteers at her child's school or perhaps a Boy Scout leader or driver for the local Meals on Wheels. There is so much more to volunteering than that. Organizations are crying out for people to do many tasks. And for those who can't or don't want to leave home? Many volunteer tasks can be done from home. Here is just a small sample of some of the things that volunteers can do:

## VOLUNTEERS



- Read to school children
- Visit local nursing homes
- Teach classes in a community center
- Mentor young adults in high school or college
- Make things, such as knitting hats for underprivileged children
- Do taxes for seniors
- Visit or telephone neighbors confined to their homes
- Be an information guide in a local hospital
- Help coach children's sports
- Read to children at the library

*Source: United States Department of Labor.*

***Although it is true that, "charity begins at home," with this ever-expanding world, you may find the perfect volunteer opportunity on the Internet for a cause you believe in. Some organizations depend on people to be able to write for the Internet or do research, so it's possible for you to help people on the other side of the continent.***

**WWW**

The  
**PRECISION**  
Study

Prospective Randomized Evaluation  
of Celecoxib Integrated Safety  
vs. Ibuprofen Or Naproxen

# Medication KNOW-HOW

Walk into any pharmacy and you'll see a huge assortment of over-the-counter medications. You can buy medications to help manage pain, reduce gas, and ease the stuffiness of allergies, among many others. The choice can be overwhelming, from the pain reliever **Aspirin** to the stomach acid medication **Zantac**. Then, if you walk over to the pharmacy counter, you can see hundreds of prescription drugs behind the counter, ranging from the antibiotic **Ampicillin** to the antidepressant **Zoloft**.

Taking medications is an absolute must for many people. As participants in The PRECISION Study, you understand the importance of medication to treat illnesses and discomfort.

Unfortunately, not everyone knows this, and even among those who do, accidents and misunderstandings can happen.

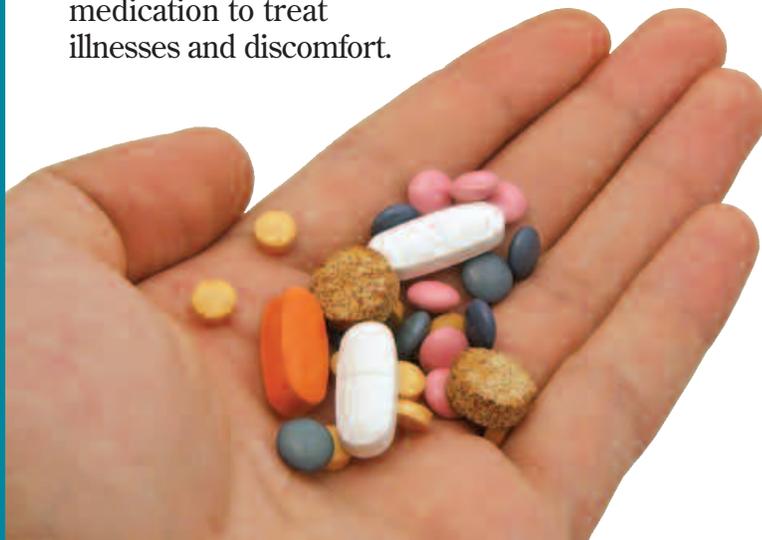
In 2004, it was estimated that as many as 82% of the population in the United States took at least 1 prescription medication, over-the-counter medication, or herbal supplement over the course of a week. Thirty percent said they used 5 or more over the course of a week. That's a lot of people. Many had side effects resulting in the need to seek medical attention. In 2006, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* reported that there were approximately 700,000 emergency room visits

in 1 year in the United States because of side effects or medication interactions. One in 6 of the people who came to the emergency room needed further care, such as admission to the hospital.

The need for emergency care rose with age, with seniors more than twice as likely to seek emergency help after taking medications and 7 times more likely to be hospitalized than their younger counterparts.

Here are the 5 drug groups that cause most of the preventable medication-related hospital admissions:

- Antiplatelets—medications that interfere with blood clotting
- Diuretics—"water pills" that help you eliminate fluid
- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatories—pain killers such as ibuprofen and naproxen
- Anticoagulants—medications that prevent blood clots



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Video game systems have grown up and are no longer solely the domain of those under a certain age. More and more, consumers and healthcare workers are recognizing that video games can be helpful in maintaining—and even improving—the quality of life for their players.

Take the Wii game system, for example. The games in *Wii Sports* (bowling, golf, tennis, boxing, and baseball) are becoming increasingly popular among seniors and

younger people who are undergoing rehabilitation for an illness or injury. Some seniors, retirement homes, convalescent hospitals, and rehabilitation centers have bought the game system because it gets the residents up and moving. In hospitals, some occupational therapists are using the game system to help patients who have had strokes regain use of their arms and to help with their eye-hand coordination.

And there's more. The journal *Nature* published the results of a study in 2003 that found people who played video games had 30% better visual tracking than people who didn't play video games.

If physical games don't interest you, the Wii and other game systems, such as PlayStation and X-Box, have mentally stimulating games, such as *Brain Age*. Although studies haven't yet proved their worth, the people who play them enjoy them and feel that they help stimulate mental function. And if they do, that's all that should count, right?

## Medication **Know-How** *cont'd*

- Opioid analgesics—narcotics (controlled drugs) used to treat severe pain

Another issue involved in medication safety is that some people aren't aware of what is in the medications they take. This can lead to unintentional overdoses. Take acetaminophen, for instance. Acetaminophen, sold under the brand name Tylenol®, is metabolized (broken down) in the liver. There are clear instructions on the bottle about how often

you should take it and the most you should take in 24 hours; however, acetaminophen is also in many cold medications. If you are sick with a cold and take acetaminophen for a headache at 10 AM and then, because you're miserable and stuffed up, you take cold medicine at noon, you will have taken too much acetaminophen in too short a period of time. It's not intentional, but that is a drug overdose. If you do that too often, you may develop liver problems.

To prevent problems with your medications, read the labels. If you take supplements and herbal and natural products, ask your pharmacist if there might be any interactions between those products and the medications you take. These precautions take only a few extra minutes and they can help you avoid becoming 1 of the thousands of people who end up in the emergency room because of medication-related problems.

*Source: ConsumerAffairs.com*

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# Questions AND Answers

## What type of education do pharmacists have?

Pharmacists in the United States must have a Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) in order to practice. Admission into a pharmacy degree program requires at least 2 years of college studies and, while an undergraduate degree isn't essential, when applying for admission, most students have a degree or at least 3 years or more of college.

## What do pharmacists do?

Pharmacists learn about the chemical makeup of medications and how they affect the body. They understand how medications can react with each other and what medications are *contraindicated* (shouldn't be taken) with certain illnesses or disorders. They use this knowledge to teach their customers about their prescriptions and choices of over-the-counter medications.

## Where can pharmacists practice?

Pharmacists can practice in many places, from hospitals to private pharmacies. They can choose to own their own pharmacy or be part of a larger chain. Pharmacists are also

employed by research and pharmaceutical companies. Whether they choose to work with the public or behind a desk, pharmacists are in great demand.

## Is it better to get your prescriptions online or in person?

It really depends on individual circumstances, but nothing can beat the in-person interaction between you and your pharmacist. Often, when we ask questions, the answers we get can lead to further questions and discussion. If you fill all your prescriptions at the same pharmacy, your records will all be in one place; this will help the pharmacist understand your particular needs.

## Spicy Oven Cheese Fondue (in Bread Bowl)



### A Heart-Healthy Recipe

Following a healthy diet doesn't have to mean avoiding snacking or treating yourself. Whether you've been asked to bring a dish to a get-together or you want something to enjoy at home, this cheese fondue in a bread bowl is a tasty treat.

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|---|--|
| 1 (1 pound) loaf of round sourdough or French bread | 1/2 cup chopped green onions               |
| 8-ounce package shredded reduced-fat cheddar cheese | 4 ounces canned, diced green chili peppers |
| 2/3 cup light cream cheese                          | 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce            |
| 1 1/2 cups fat-free sour cream                      |  |

*Preheat oven to 350°F. Make a bowl from the round loaf of bread by cutting a circle in the top of the bread. Remove the top by working with your hands to get at the bottom to create a bowl shape (hollow out the loaf) but reserve the bread for dipping later.*

*In mixing bowl, beat the cheese, cream cheese, sour cream, green onions, chili peppers, and Worcestershire sauce together on low speed. Spoon the mixture into the bread bowl and cover the filled bread bowl with a sheet of foil. While baking, place the bread bowl on a cookie sheet, bake until the cheese is melted and bubbly (about 1 hour).*

*Serve with the bread top cut up into bite-size chunks.*

Nutrition Facts	
Per serving, yields 16 servings	
Calories	168
Calories from fat	27%
Total fat	5 g
Saturated fat	2.9 g
Monounsaturated fat	1 g
Polyunsaturated fat	0.3 g
Sodium	324 mg
Carbohydrates	20 g
Protein	9 g
Cholesterol	12 mg
Fiber	1.1 g

Source: [www.MedicineNet.com](http://www.MedicineNet.com)