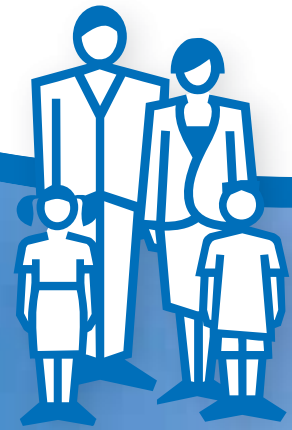


# Healthwise

A PERS Health Insurance Program newsletter



FALL 2010

## Understanding how medication can increase your risk of falling

As people age, the risk of falling is often overlooked. However, falls are one of the most common causes of nonfatal injuries and hospital admissions. A single fall can result in irreversible and severe injury.

These injuries can make it hard to get around and limit independent living. Even people who are not injured during a fall can develop a fear of falling, which also can limit activities, reduce mobility and physical fitness, and ultimately increase the true risk of falling.

### Medication can increase your risk of falling

Besides age, risk factors for falling include a previous fall, poor strength, an altered gait, balance impairment and inappropriate medications.

As patients age, they are frequently diagnosed with multiple diseases and prescribed multiple medications. Having multiple diseases increases the likelihood that a medication will interact with a disease state, and taking multiple medications dramatically increases the risk of dangerous drug interactions, often leading to a fall risk.

In a recent study, the risk of hospitalization, a visit to the emergency room or fall increased by 20 percent in patients taking medications known to cause dizziness and sedation — especially medications used to aid sleep. However, sleep medications are not the only culprits.

As patients age, their metabolism decreases,

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## Medication information for PERS ODS and Kaiser Prescription Drug Plan members

For a complete list of brand and generic medications covered under your current ODS, Providence or Clear One PERS prescription drug benefit, please visit ODS online at [www.odscompanies.com/members](http://www.odscompanies.com/members), or log on to your myODS account and consult the PERS Prescription Drug Plan List of Covered Drugs. You may also contact ODS Pharmacy Customer Service for additional information at **503-265-4709** or **888-786-7509**. For more information related to your current Kaiser PERS prescription drug benefit, please contact Kaiser Membership Services at **877-221-8221**.

# Surfing the Web for good health

An increasing number of older Americans are going online — and getting a little healthier because of it. Increased access to health information and the ability to connect online with others who have similar health concerns often means better self-care and improved health outcomes.

In the past five years, the number of people age 65 and older who are actively using the Internet has increased by more than 55 percent, from 11.3 million active users in November 2004 to 17.5 million in November 2009.

The largest percentage increase in Internet use since 2005 has been in the 70 to 75 age group, according to the Pew Internet and American Life Project. The survey found that 45 percent of that age bracket is online compared with 26 percent in 2005.

The top online destination for people over 65 last fall was Google Search, with 10.3 million unique visitors, reports The Nielsen Company. Windows Media Player and

Facebook were next with 8.2 million and 7.9 million visitors, respectively. Interestingly, Facebook, which came in at No.3, ranked No.

**“The largest percentage increase in Internet use since 2005 has been in the 70 to 75 age group.”**

45 just a year ago among sites visited by senior citizens.

While Facebook is growing in popularity among seniors, they use the Internet less for socializing and entertainment and more as a tool for sending e-mail, making purchases and searching for information. And health information tops the list.

Kaiser Permanente says the largest user group of its kp.org site are people between the age of 51 and 60.

Because older adults are more likely to suffer health problems, it is not surprising that many wired seniors search the Web for medical advice and health information. Mobility issues also can

make online health records or research a good option for managing healthcare.

According to a study in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, health education has helped decrease the number of seniors who are chronically disabled and require nursing-home care. The Internet is a great place to learn about basic self-care and preventive home remedies that can help you live healthier for longer.

So go ahead — surf the Web and catch a wave of good health!

*Courtesy of Kaiser Permanente®.*

## Search sense

When searching for health information online, be sure to use reputable sources, including university and government sites. **NIHSeniorHealth.gov** is an easy-to-use Website featuring basic health and wellness information for older adults from the National Institutes of Health. You can use the buttons at the top of each page to make the text bigger, change text color or hear the text read aloud.

## PERS 2010 Plan Change Meeting Schedule

*Pre-registration not required*

AREA	DATE	TIME	SITE
<i>Portland</i>	<b>9/13/10</b> Monday	9:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.	<b>Holiday Inn-Airport</b> 8439 NE Columbia Blvd. (Park and enter at restaurant entrance)
<i>Gresham</i>	<b>9/14/10</b> Tuesday	9:30 a.m.	<b>Holiday Inn</b> 2752 NE Hogan Dr
<i>Oregon City</i>	<b>9/14/10</b> Tuesday	1:30 p.m.	<b>Providence Willamette Falls Community Center</b> 519 15th St. (Auditorium)
<i>Eugene</i>	<b>9/15/10</b> Wednesday	9:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.	<b>Lane Community College Center for Meeting and Learning</b> 4000 E 30th Ave., Bldg. 19, Room 102
<i>Bend</i>	<b>9/20/10</b> Monday	10:30 a.m.	<b>Riverhouse</b> 3075 N Business Hwy. 97 Deschutes B
<i>Prineville</i>	<b>9/20/10</b> Monday	2:30 p.m.	<b>Crook County Library</b> 175 Meadow Lakes Dr.
<i>John Day</i>	<b>9/21/10</b> Tuesday	9:30 a.m.	<b>National Forest of Malheur Co.</b> 431 Patterson Bridge Rd.
<i>Hines/Burns</i>	<b>9/21/10</b> Tuesday	2 p.m.	<b>Inn at Cross Keys - Hines (Formerly Comfort Inn)</b> 504 N. Hwy. 20
<i>Ontario</i>	<b>9/22/10</b> Wednesday	9:30 a.m.	<b>Four Rivers Cultural Center</b> 676 SW 5th Ave., Collins Room
<i>Baker City</i>	<b>9/22/10</b> Wednesday	2:00 p.m.	<b>Geiser Grand Hotel</b> 1996 Main St.
<i>La Grande</i>	<b>9/23/10</b> Thursday	9 a.m.	<b>Blue Mt Conference Center</b> 404 12th St.
<i>Pendleton</i>	<b>9/23/10</b> Thursday	2 p.m.	<b>Vert Club Room</b> 345 SW 4th St.
<i>Keizer</i>	<b>9/28/10</b> Tuesday	9:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.	<b>Keizer Renaissance Inn Wall Street Bar &amp; Grill</b> 5188 Wittenberg Lane (Off River Road N)
<i>Hood River</i>	<b>9/30/10</b> Thursday	9:30 a.m.	<b>Hood River Valley Adult Center</b> 2010 Sterling Rd.
<i>The Dalles</i>	<b>9/30/10</b> Thursday	1:30 p.m.	<b>Columbia Portage Grill</b> 3223 Bret Clodfelter Way
<i>Roseburg</i>	<b>10/5/10</b> Tuesday	11 a.m.	<b>Douglas County Fairgrounds Complex</b> 2110 SW Frear St. (Cascade West)
<i>Grants Pass</i>	<b>10/5/10</b> Tuesday	3 p.m.	<b>Taprock Events Center At The Lodge At Riverside</b> 955 SE 7th (Maple Room)

## PERS 2010 Plan Change Meeting Schedule

*Pre-registration not required*

AREA	DATE	TIME	SITE
<i>Medford</i>	<b>10/6/10</b> Wednesday	1 p.m.	<b>Pacific Convention Center</b> <b>Ramada Inn Hotel</b> 2250 Biddle Rd.
<i>Klamath Falls</i>	<b>10/7/10</b> Thursday	9 a.m.	<b>Klamath County Fairgrounds</b> 3531 South Sixth St. Meeting Room A
<i>La Pine</i>	<b>10/7/10</b> Thursday	1:30 p.m.	<b>La Pine Senior Center</b> 16450 Victory Way
<i>Corvallis</i>	<b>10/11/10</b> Monday	9:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.	<b>Benton County Fairgrounds</b> 110 SW 53rd St. Conference Room
<i>Salem</i>	<b>10/14/10</b> Thursday	10 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.	<b>Roth's Hospitality Center</b> 1130 Wallace Road NW The Oregon Room (parking in rear)
<i>Beaverton</i>	<b>10/18/10</b> Monday	8:30 a.m. & 11 a.m.	<b>Embassy Suites</b> 9000 SW Washington Square Rd. Regency One Room
<i>St. Helens</i>	<b>10/18/10</b> Monday	3 p.m.	<b>Columbia Learning Center</b> 375 S 18th St.
<i>Astoria</i>	<b>10/19/10</b> Tuesday	9 a.m.	<b>Holiday Inn Express</b> 204 W Marine Dr.
<i>Tillamook</i>	<b>10/19/10</b> Tuesday	2:30 p.m.	<b>Shilo Inn</b> 2515 N Main St.
<i>Albany</i>	<b>10/21/10</b> Thursday	9:30 a.m.	<b>Linn County Fair &amp; Expo</b> 3700 Knox Butte Road E (Willamette Event Center, Room 3)
<i>McMinnville</i>	<b>10/25/10</b> Monday	9:30 a.m.	<b>McMinnville Senior Center</b> 2250 NE McDaniel Lane
<i>Lincoln City</i>	<b>10/26/10</b> Tuesday	9 a.m.	<b>Lincoln City Community Center</b> 2150 NE Oar Place
<i>Florence</i>	<b>10/26/10</b> Tuesday	2:30 p.m.	<b>Florence Events Center</b> 715 Quince Street
<i>Coos Bay/ N. Bend</i>	<b>10/27/10</b> Wednesday	9:30 a.m.	<b>Red Lion</b> 1313 Bayshore Drive
<i>Keizer</i>	<b>10/28/10</b> Thursday	10 a.m.	<b>Keizer Renaissance Inn Wall Street Bar &amp; Grill</b> 5188 Wittenberg Lane (Off River Road N)

making them even more susceptible to certain medication side effects. Medications that don't normally cause increased dizziness and sleepiness can be dangerous for these older adults.

**Examples of medications that can increase the risk of falling include:**

- Anti-anxiety medications that cause prolonged sedation
- Antihistamines that cause sedation and confusion
- Anti-psychotic and anti-depressant medications that cause sedation and confusion
- Blood pressure medications that cause dizziness and frequent urination
- Muscle relaxants and anti-spasmodics that cause sedation and weakness
- Pain relievers that cause severe sedation, dizziness, confusion and constipation
- Sleep aids that increase sedation and confusion



NEVER stop taking prescribed medications without first consulting with your prescribing physician.

**Reduce your risk of falling**

The majority of falls are preventable. Here are some tips to help reduce your risk of falling:

- Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist about your medications, and ask if you can stop taking the ones that cause confusion, dizziness, sedation or balance instability.
- Work with your care provider to control bladder disorders that make you need to use the bathroom frequently at night.
- Exercise regularly to improve muscle strength.
- Make sure your home is setup to reduce the risk of falling. An occupational or physical therapist might be able to help you with this assessment. Suggested improvements include:
  - Install handrails in the bathroom.
  - Clear clutter and obstacles from hallways and the pathway to the bath room — this might include removing throw rugs, papers, books and clothes.
  - Improve the lighting in your home.
- Have your eyes checked every year, and wear contact lenses or glasses if prescribed.
- Use a walker, cane or crutches when necessary.

If you feel your medications might be causing you to be less stable on your feet, talk to your care provider. Don't wait until you actually fall and hurt yourself.

*Josh Bishop, PharmD  
Clear One Health Plans — A PacificSource Company*

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## **PERS**

www.pershealth.com  
P.O. Box 40187  
Portland, OR 97240-0187  
503-224-7377  
800-768-7377

### *PERS Pension Office*

www.oregon.gov/pers  
*Mailing Address*  
P.O. Box 23700  
Tigard, OR 97281-3700

### *Street Address*

11410 S.W. 68th Pkwy.  
Tigard, OR 97223-8634  
503-598-7377  
888-320-7377

## **Kaiser Permanente**

www.kaiserpermanente.org  
500 N.E. Multnomah St., Ste. 100  
Portland, OR 97232-2099  
503-813-2000  
800-813-2000

## **Providence Health Plan**

www.providence.org/healthplans  
3601 S.W. Murray Blvd., #10  
Beaverton, OR 97005  
503-574-8000  
800-603-2340

### *Mailing Address*

P.O. Box 4327  
Portland, OR 97208-4327

### *Claims*

P.O. Box 3125  
Portland, OR 97208-3125

### *Providence RN*

503-574-6520  
800-700-0481

## **Clear One Health Plans**

www.clearonehp.com  
2965 N.E. Conners Ave.  
Bend, OR 97701  
541-385-5315  
888-863-3637

## *Claims*

P.O. Box 7469  
Bend, OR 97701

## **ODS**

www.odscompanies.com  
601 S.W. Second Ave.  
Portland, OR 97204-3156

### *Medical*

503-243-3880  
800-962-1533 (Oregon)  
800-852-5195 (National)

### *Dental*

503-243-4494  
800-452-1058 (Oregon)  
800-852-5195 (National)

### *Pharmacy*

503-265-4709  
888-786-7509

### *Claims*

P.O. Box 4030  
Portland, OR 97208-4030