



GREAT-WEST  
HEALTHCARE

# DRIVER'S SEAT

IN VOLUME 28

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## DID YOU KNOW?

### MORE THAN 90 MILLION

Americans have trouble understanding medical information<sup>1</sup>

### 1 MILLION+ SERIOUS DRUG REACTIONS

occur every year in the U.S.<sup>2</sup>

**24% OF PEOPLE** with diabetes don't know they have it<sup>3</sup>



<sup>1</sup> *Health Literacy: A Prescription to End Confusion*, Institute of Medicine, April 2004

<sup>2</sup> *Standardizing Medication Labels: Confusing Patients Less. Workshop Summary*, Institute of Medicine, April 2008

<sup>3</sup> *American Diabetes Association*



## KNOWLEDGE IS POWER – TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR HEALTH

**FACT OR FICTION?**  
*Most people speak up when they don't understand medical information.*

The truth is, many of us are embarrassed to admit it when we don't fully understand medical information received from our doctor, pharmacist or health plan. Complicated medical terms and treatment options often leave us confused and overwhelmed.

But not understanding directions on a prescription bottle or not knowing which drugs will react badly if taken together can have serious consequences. **More than 1 million serious drug reactions occur annually in the U.S.**, resulting in emergency room visits, hospital stays, or even death.<sup>2</sup>

What do YOU need to learn about your prescriptions, medical conditions and risk factors to get your health I.Q. up to speed?

**Hit the brakes.** Stop something harmful *before* it happens. Visit [MyGreatWest.com](http://MyGreatWest.com) and click on the *Wellness* tab to find the health screening tests that are right for you.

**Face up to the facts.** It's not easy to admit what smoking, too little exercise or a love of french fries may be doing to your health, but taking positive action now can help protect you and your pocketbook in the future.

**Be a know-it-all.** Learn the warning signs of a heart attack, stroke and other serious illnesses. Visit [americanheart.org](http://americanheart.org) for a better chance at a healthy outcome.

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# TAKE OUR QUIZ

## 1

*Lack of energy or fatigue may be symptoms of which of the following?*

- A. a thyroid problem
- B. Type 1 or 2 diabetes
- C. anemia
- D. depression
- E. all of the above

## 2

*What is the leading cause of death in the U.S. for men and women?*

- A. stroke
- B. heart disease
- C. cancer

## 3

*When a smoker inhales, nicotine is carried deep into the lungs, affecting other parts of the body, including:*

- A. heart and blood vessels
- B. hormones
- C. metabolism
- D. brain
- E. all of the above

## A

*Answers:*

1. E, all of the above
2. B, heart disease
3. E, all of the above  
(see [cancer.org](http://cancer.org) for more information)

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# OFFICE VISIT 101



## MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR TRIPS TO THE DOCTOR

**Ask questions.** Your doctor can't read your mind. Share what confuses and concerns you most, and keep asking questions until you understand.

**Keep the facts straight.** Don't rely on your memory. Bring a notepad and pen to record your doctor's explanations, advice on how to keep a symptom or illness in check, or action to take before your next visit.

**Do your homework.** Come prepared with a list of prescriptions, over-the-counter medications and supplements you're taking. Jot down any unusual symptoms you're experiencing, so you'll remember to mention them during your visit.

**Bring a family member or friend.** Especially in the case of a serious illness or recent diagnosis, medical appointments can be emotional and even a bit scary. You'll appreciate the extra support. Plus, your friend can take notes and bring up questions you didn't think to ask.



IT'S YOUR HEALTH.  
STAY IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT.®

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