

New Web Site Helps Prevent Medicine Mix-Ups

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By Leslie Knopp

SEATTLE - All those medicines we take to help us can sometimes be dangerous when mixed together.

But now, a Seattle company has developed a Web site so we can check for ourselves if our medicines interact badly.

Genelex developed the Web site for doctors, but the company is now offering it to the public.



"There may be no one physician or prescriber looking at this over-all mix," said Genelex Chairman Howard Coleman.

A survey of Medicare patients showed 40 percent of them take five medicines or more, and 12 percent take 10 medications or more. Now they can check on those medicines online.

Genelex is offering patients a one month free trial. After that it costs \$200 a year for a subscription. Coleman says patients should check with their doctors because some clinics already subscribe.

Coleman says the Genelex Web site is more complete than others already out there, listing 2,000 medicines. They include over-the-counter medicines, herbal supplements and illegal drugs.

"This is information that they could take to their doctor that can be very valuable to the doctor," said Coleman. Coleman adds that patients should never change their prescriptions based on the information from the Web site. They should always talk with doctor about it.

David Soper, who has diabetes, wishes he had the site years ago. He takes medicine daily.

"She said my speech was getting very slow," said David. His wife says David eventually passed out. He was rushed to the emergency room. "At first they thought I'd had a heart attack," said Soper. It wasn't. It was the interaction between the medicines he was taking.

It's happened to him twice, with completely different drugs. The second instance, he had severe hallucinations. "I suppose somebody could figure out some of this stuff by Googling, but that could take you forever," said David.

David checked out the Genelex Web site. He says he wishes he would have had it years ago. It might have saved him two trips to the Emergency Room.

"I think this is an interesting and needed tool. I'm glad to have another arrow in my personal health care quiver," said David.

For More Information:

Genelex Web site -- www.genemedrx.com.