

NEWS RELEASE



United Health Foundation

Contact: Mark Lindsay
952-992-4297

(For immediate release)

United Health Foundation and FDA Partner To Promote the Safe Use of Over-The-Counter Medications

MINNEAPOLIS (May 11, 2005) – The misuse of over-the-counter medications accounts for a reported 178,000 hospitalizations annually. In an effort to help people achieve safer health care outcomes, United Health Foundation, in partnership with the Food and Drug Administration, has launched a nationwide campaign to educate consumers about how to use over-the-counter drugs safely.

“Over-the-counter medications are powerful drugs that must be used correctly if they are to work effectively,” said Dr. Steven Galson, Acting Director, Center for Drug Evaluation and Research US Food and Drug Administration. “With the help of the United Health Foundation, we are educating consumers about important steps they can take, and how to work with their health professionals to use over-the-counter medications safely and appropriately for themselves and their families.

The health education campaign is appearing through the end of the year in national print publications and online health and news sources, such as *People, USA Weekend, Good Housekeeping, Ebony, Better Homes & Gardens, Woman’s Day, Prevention, Family Circle, Parenting, Vista, Yahoo!, AOL, ABCNews.com and About.com*. The campaign is aimed at women ages 25-60, who are estimated to make 75 percent of all household health decisions. Materials are available in both English and Spanish.

Through this campaign, consumers are reminded to:

- Always read and follow directions on over-the-counter product labels;
- Avoid taking more than one medication with the same active ingredients; and
- Talk with a health care professional if any side effects occur.

“As part of our mission, United Health Foundation partners with trusted organizations to provide reliable, science-based information that helps individuals and their physicians achieve better and safer health outcomes,” said Reed Tuckson, M.D., vice president, United Health Foundation. “Given the significant health consequences that can arise from misuse of over-the-counter medications, we are pleased to partner with the FDA to focus on this important issue.”

For more information and tips on how to use over-the-counter medications safely, visit www.unitedhealthfoundation.org/otc.html or www.fda.gov.

Editor’s note: Media inquiries for the FDA should be directed to Crystal Rice at (301) 827-1673.

About United Health Foundation

United Health Foundation (www.unitedhealthfoundation.org) is a nonprofit, private foundation with a mission to support the health and medical decisions made by physicians, health professionals, community leaders and individuals that lead to better health outcomes and healthier communities. The Foundation, which was established in 1999 by UnitedHealth Group, supports a variety of projects and activities nationally to further this mission.