

Most medicines non-prescription

Q. What is the difference between prescription medications and non-prescription? I've gotten some that seemed the same.

A. Your family's medicine cabinet may look as if it's a small size pharmacy — stocked with a variety of remedies for all types of ailments.

The first-aid spray, laxative, antihistamine, decongestant and painkiller are all available over-the-counter (OTC), without a doctor's prescription. In fact, six of every 10 medicines in the average home is an OTC.

According to a recent survey, we Americans treat four times as many of our common health problems ourselves with OTCs than we take to our doctor.

The difference between prescription and OTC drugs is spelled out in the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act. It says that drugs that are habit-forming or unsafe for use except under a doctor's supervision



Terry Glibb

can be dispensed only with a prescription.

Drugs that are generally considered safe for the consumer to use by following the required label directions and warnings are available over-the-counter.

The OTC market is expanding as Americans become more health conscious. The widespread availability of good products with a clear margin of safety, more comprehensive labeling and an affordable price have combined to increase sales in recent years.

OTCs NOT ONLY relieve symp-

oms, some can even cure an illness. Others are used to prevent diseases, such as fluoride toothpaste to prevent tooth decay. Still others are used to help people manage chronic conditions.

In 1972, the FDA started reviewing all OTCs on the market to insure that these products met the criteria for safety, effectiveness and proper labeling. As a result, some products have been taken off the market while some 20 others have changed status from prescription to OTC.

Ibuprofen is an example. Originally it was only dispensed through a doctor's prescription. Now it is a common OTC pain reliever.

IN ORDER to self-medicate successfully, you must use OTCs properly.

This requires clear directions about how the medication should be used and what side effects may occur. FDA requires these detailed instructions to insure safety when us-

ing any OTC.

Prescriptions, on the other hand, carry minimal information on the label for the user.

The consumer's responsibility is to read and follow all OTC label instructions accurately and precisely. Special cautions should be noted, such as "Do not drive or operate machinery while taking this product" or "Do not take this product if you have any of the following conditions... without consulting a physician."

Surveys have shown that OTCs have saved consumers millions of dollars in medical costs. The consumer, however, needs to exercise good judgment about how and when to self-medicate to insure good health.

The Consumer Mailbag answers your questions. Address mail to The Consumer Mailbag, Concern Detroit, One Kennedy Square, 4th Floor, Detroit, 48226.

Giving concert

Moon & Lee, duo pianists, will play a program of classical music at 3 p.m. Sunday, April 9, in Varner Recital Hall, Oakland University, Rochester. Yong Hi Moon and Dai Uk Lee are faculty members at Michigan State University. Together they have performed in Baltimore, Washington, Cleveland and Los Angeles. For ticket information, call the Center for the Arts box office, 370-3013, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays.

Teachers' pay outpaces inflation

The average teacher salary in the United States slightly outpaced inflation this past year, but the National Education Association said there's still a bit of catching up to do.

The current average salary for public school teachers is \$29,567, up

5.6 percent over 1987-88, while inflation hovered around 4.5 percent.

The salaries, reported in the April NEA Today magazine, range from a high of \$41,693 in Alaska to a low of \$20,489 in South Dakota.

THE AVERAGE teacher has a master's degree and had been in the classroom for 15 years.

Information was compiled from responses from state departments of education.

The average teacher salary has

grown by \$1,844, or 12.3 percent, over the decade when salaries are adjusted for inflation.

"Teacher salaries have not increased significantly," said NEA President Mary Hatwood Futrell.

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Sealed bids to purchase any or all parcels are being received until 6:00 p.m. EST, April 18, 1989. For additional information write or phone Office of Director of Audits/Business Services.

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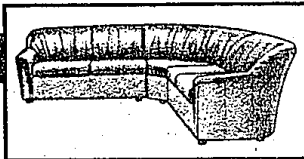
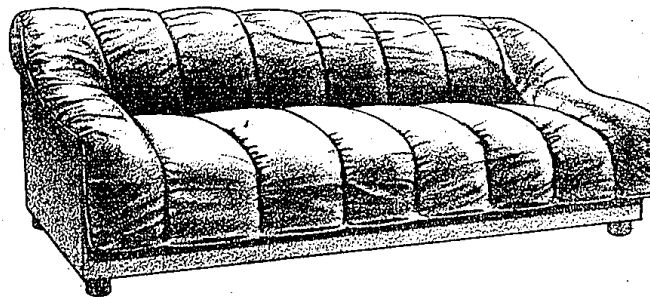
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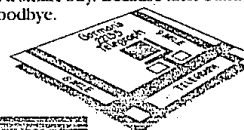
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