

# Knowledge key to self care

Nancy Hartnagel/CNS

With so much health care information and so many health care products now available via the Internet and local drugstores, playing doctor is a tempting option for many of the 35 million U.S. citizens over age 65.

Most older Americans have at least one chronic health condition and many have multiple conditions, according to "A Profile of Older Americans: 2001," a report from the Administration on Aging of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

So, how much do-it-yourself care is healthy for seniors?

Fortunately, there is plenty of medical advice available from trusted sources, much of it online.

The AARP has posted do-it-yourself health care information and links to other sites on its Web site ([www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org)).

Prominently displayed is a list of "nine symptoms NOT to treat yourself." They include:

- A feeling of pressure or squeezing in your chest.
- Severe pain, especially in the

head, chest or radiating down one arm.

- Blurred vision.
- Trouble talking or swallowing.
- Weakness or paralysis on one side.
- Dizziness and confusion.
- Blood in your urine or stool.
- Unrelieved depression.
- Shortness of breath, fever and/or cough with a yellow-green discharge.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration offers, on its Web site ([www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)), tips for buying health products online.

The FDA advises against buying from foreign sites or sites that don't provide a U.S. address and phone number. It advises consumers to check with the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy ([www.nabp.net](http://www.nabp.net)) "to determine whether a Web site is a licensed pharmacy in good standing."

The Council on Family Health, a nonprofit organization dedicated to educating consumers on health and

safety issues, offers at its Web site ([www.cfinfo.org](http://www.cfinfo.org)) two especially useful pages. One is an easy-to-print chart, "My Medicine Record."

The other contains "tips for seniors on safe medicine use." These include: reading all medicine labels and package inserts; using memory aids such as calendars and pill boxes; throwing out old or expired medicines at least once a year; and talking to your doctor about every medicine taken.

Because of increased interest in a broad range of healing philosophies, approaches and therapies that are not in the mainstream, the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine was formed at the National Institutes of Health.

The center's Web site ([www.ncam.nih.gov](http://www.ncam.nih.gov)) provides information about complementary and alternative therapies, including directories of practitioners.

General information on medical conditions, treatments and drugs is available on several sites: the Na-

## Supplement Use

Those 50 or older who say they...

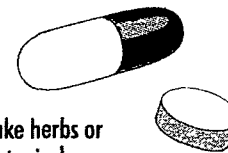
83%

Take vitamins and minerals



23%

Take herbs or botanicals



41%

Discuss the use of supplements with their doctor

Source: AARP

© 2002 CNS Graphics

tional Library of Medicine of NIH at [www.nlm.nih.gov](http://www.nlm.nih.gov); HealthFinder, from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, at [www.healthfinder.gov](http://www.healthfinder.gov); and Intellihealth, a subsidiary of Aetna, at [www.itelihealth.com](http://www.itelihealth.com).

Another site, WebMD ([www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com)) offers information on 19 topics of interest to older adults under "Self-Care Adviser."

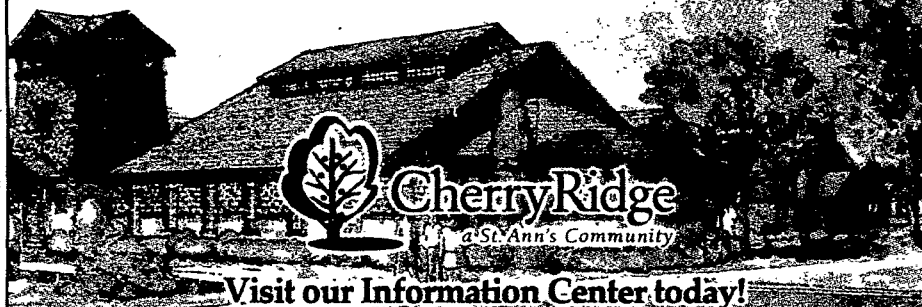
The common and common-sense Rx for do-it-yourself care: talk about it with your health care provider.

## ST. ANN'S COMMUNITY Area's Leading Senior Housing & Health Care Provider

### Webster's Newest Choice In Residential Senior Living

Cherry Ridge, Webster's newest senior living community, set among 41 wooded acres near Five Mile Line Road, will offer an ideal retirement lifestyle.

- Spacious cottage & apartment home floor plans
- Assisted living suites available
- Priority access to a full continuum of health care
- Scheduled transportation
- Wellness promotion & exercise programs
- Flexible meal plans & housekeeping services available
- Interior & exterior maintenance
- Fitness center, café, library & more
- 24-hour security
- Convenient location
- Familiar, trusted sponsor — St. Ann's Community



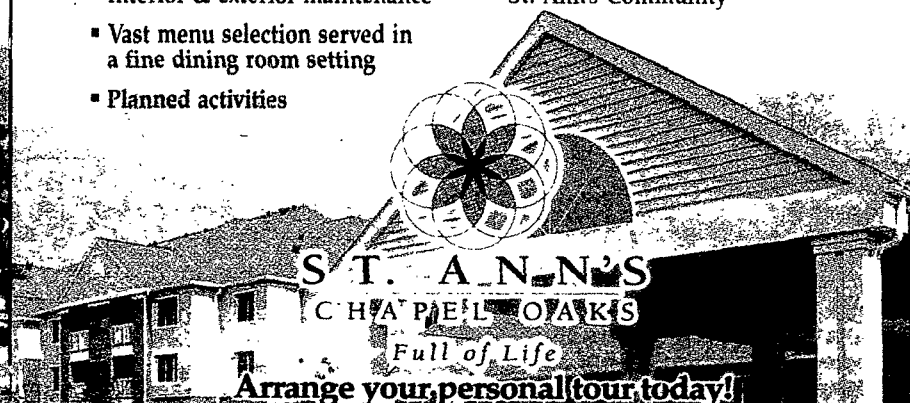
876 Ridge Road • Webster, NY 14580 • (585) 697-6700  
[www.cherryridgecommunity.com](http://www.cherryridgecommunity.com)



### Celebrate Life at Chapel Oaks

Chapel Oaks, Rochester's premier rental retirement community located on 14 beautiful, park-like acres offers the lifestyle of choice for active seniors.

- Flexible rental agreement
- Spacious one- & two-bedroom apartment homes
- Washer/dryer & private patio or balcony in each residence
- Priority access to a full range of health care services on the St. Ann's campus
- Interior & exterior maintenance
- Vast menu selection served in a fine dining room setting
- Planned activities
- Convenient location with landscaped grounds, picnic, gardening & walking areas
- 24-hour security
- Local courtesy transportation
- Fitness center, solarium, putting green & more
- Familiar, trusted sponsor — St. Ann's Community



1550 Portland Avenue • Rochester, NY 14621 • (585) 697-6600  
[www.stannscommunity.com](http://www.stannscommunity.com)

