

Drug Interaction

The **improvements** in living conditions, healthcare, medication, and **nutrition** over the last fifty years or so, have not only improved our standards of living and health, it has also given us a greater **life expectancy**.

In 1960, life expectancy in Germany was 69 years. In 2015, it was 81 and expected to increase. An older society also means more **infirmity** in the **elderly**, and with it the need for medication and health care products. The average senior may have all or any of a number of health problems such as type 2 diabetes and **cardiovascular** disease, **osteoarthritis**, dementia and osteoporosis. Many older patients may take between 5 and 15 different types of preparation daily, which **increases** the risk of drug interaction. Fortunately, most elderly patients are **regulars** at their favourite pharmacy.

PTA: Good morning Mrs. Ellis, how are you?

Good morning Petra. Not feeling too bad today.

What can I do for you, Mrs. Ellis?

I have a **prescription** that needs filling.

Let's see. Okay your GP has given you a prescription for blood pressure medication.

Yes, I have had problems every now and again with **hypertension** and he recommended that I take this medicine. He said it's only a low dosage to see how we get on. I have to get checked regularly to see if it helps.

Just a moment Mrs. Ellis, I'll need to check your customer account. You regularly buy ibuprofen. Is that correct?

Yes, it is. Especially at this time of year when it starts to get cold and damp, I really notice my arthritis and taking a painkiller mornings and evenings helps. My orthopaedist recommended it the last time I went to see her. Why? Is it not good for me?

Ibuprofen is an effective painkiller, but it is also an anti-inflammatory drug. Anti-inflammatory drugs may have what is called a drug-drug interaction with drugs for hypertension medication. Did you tell your GP when he gave you the prescription?

No, I forgot to say I was taking painkillers. Is it dangerous?

Well, **according to** one or two studies that the pharmacist was telling us about, the interaction can affect the **efficacy** of the blood pressure drug and actually increase blood pressure. Really? Oh dear!

And long-term use may lead to problems with the kidneys.

What should I do? My blood pressure has certainly risen on hearing all this!

Don't worry Mrs. Ellis. I'll just pop into the back office and contact your GP. Please take a seat I'll just be a few moments. Thank you.

So, Mrs Ellis, I have checked with your GP and explained the problem. He recommended coming to see him. His assistant said you can come in any time this morning and she'll let you through to him straight away! There aren't many patients there at the moment, so you won't have to wait too long!

I am glad I came here. My goodness, imagine what might have happened if I had gone to another pharmacy! Isn't it a lucky thing that I'm a regular here?

It certainly is! So, see you later. Bye, Mrs. Ellis.

Goodbye Petra, thank you so much. See you later! ■

*Catherine Croghan,
Lecturer in English and native speaker*

VOCABULARY

drug Interaction	Wechselwirkung
improvements	Verbesserungen
nutrition	Ernährung
life expectancy	Lebenserwartung
infirmity	Gebrechen
elderly	Senioren
cardiovascular disease	Herz-Kreislauf-Erkrankung
osteoarthritis	Arthrose
increases	erhöht
regulars	Stammkunden
prescription	Rezept, Verordnung
GP (general practitioner)	Hausarzt, Allgemeinarzt
hypertension	Bluthochdruck, Hypertonie
customer account	Kundenkonto
anti-inflammatory	entzündungshemmend
according to	laut, nach
efficacy	Wirksamkeit
long-term use	Dauergebrauch
kidneys	Nieren
straight away	gleich, sofort

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