



## In the Pharmacy

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**A simple brown bag may hold one answer to better health literacy, according to pharmacist Dr. Kari Trotter Wall.**

"To help my patients really understand their treatments, I invite them to put all of the medications they are confused about in a brown bag. They bring them in, and I sit with them and explain what each one is used for, and how to take each correctly. I then have them repeat the instructions back to me to show me they understand," says Trotter Wall.

"Many times we are able to cut down on the amount of medications they are taking due to duplicate therapy. It also opens up the door to other questions they may have about their diseases," she says.

Trotter Wall works at the retail pharmacy on the University of Southern California campus. She also is the university's director of pharmacy. This gives her the unique opportunity to help patients and teach pharmacy students in a retail setting.

"Being a pharmacist is a lot like being a teacher. People need to be educated in order to make better decisions about any topic," she says. "Most patients hear what their doctors tell them. But they don't have enough time to process it and ask questions. As a pharmacist, I can have that conversation with them."

Trotter Wall and her pharmacy students spend a lot of time educating patients, who are university students, faculty and staff, and residents of the

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surrounding community. The pharmacy also has a clinic where screenings are done for health risks such as diabetes, high cholesterol and hypertension.

"A lot of residents in the area do not have easy access to health care. They also tend to self-diagnose. People fall into doing what someone they know did to treat an illness. If we are able to help patients understand their conditions and medications, they are more likely to stick with their treatments," she says.

An important issue Trotter Wall talks about with her patients is how specific medications work. "I explain in detail what the medicine will do for their diseases," she says. "I tell them that there are no wonder drugs — the medicine may not make your illness go away, but this is how it will help you."

Trotter Wall wants to help her patients become proactive instead of reactive when it comes to their health. "People do a lot of research when they're buying something material. When they buy cars, they look at magazines, ask for opinions and test drive them.

"But the minute their doctor gives them a disease diagnosis, they accept it and move on. They don't do the research needed to understand the disease," she says. "My hope is that my patients will become advocates for their own health by learning about their diseases and their medications, and treating their health like their most valuable possession."

### SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

## Fact Number 2

Forty-two percent of U.S. adults don't understand instructions to take medication on an empty stomach.

<b>1</b> 1902: Langston Hughes, poet, born.	<b>2</b> 1915: Biologist Ernest E. Just receives Spingarn Medal for research in fertilization and cell division.
<b>3</b> 1956: Autherine Lucy enrolls as the first black student at the University of Alabama.	<b>4</b> 1913: Rosa Parks, civil rights pioneer who sparked 1955 Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott, born.
<b>5</b> 1884: Willis Johnson patents eggbeater. 1934: Hank Aaron, major league home-run champion, born.	<b>6</b> <b>Ash Wednesday</b> 1993: Arthur Ashe Jr., tennis player, humanitarian and activist, dies.
<b>7</b> 1883: Ragtime pianist and composer Eubie Blake born.	<b>8</b> 1968: Three South Carolina State students killed during segregation protest in Orangeburg, South Carolina.
<b>9</b> 1964: Arthur Ashe Jr. becomes first black on U.S. Davis Cup team.	<b>10</b> 1927: Leontyne Price, internationally acclaimed opera singer, born. 1992: Alex Haley, Pulitzer Prize-winning author, dies.
<b>11</b> 1990: Nelson Mandela of South Africa is released from prison after 27 years.	<b>12</b> <b>Lincoln's Birthday</b> 1909: NAACP founded in New York City.
<b>13</b> 1970: Joseph L. Searles becomes first African American member of New York Stock Exchange.	<b>14</b> <b>Valentine's Day</b> 1817: Frederick Douglass, "the Great Emancipator," born.
<b>15</b> 1820: Susan B. Anthony, abolitionist and women's rights advocate, born.	<b>16</b> 1874: Frederick Douglass elected president of Freedman's Bank and Trust.
<b>17</b> 1938: Mary Frances Berry, first woman to serve as chancellor of a major research university (University of Colorado), born.	<b>18</b> <b>Presidents' Day</b> 1931: Toni Morrison, winner of 1988 Pulitzer Prize for her novel <i>Beloved</i> , born.
<b>19</b> 2002: Vonetta Flowers becomes Winter Olympics' first African American gold medalist.	<b>20</b> 1895: Frederick Douglass, leading voice in the abolitionist movement, dies.
<b>21</b> 1965: Malcolm X assassinated in New York.	<b>22</b> <b>Washington's Birthday</b> 1989: Col. Frederick D. Gregory becomes first African American to command a space shuttle mission.
<b>23</b> 1868: W.E.B. DuBois, scholar, activist and author of <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i> , born.	<b>24</b> 1864: Rebecca Lee Crumpler becomes first black woman to receive a medical degree (New England Female Medical College).
<b>25</b> 1853: First black YMCA organized in Washington, D.C.	<b>26</b> 1965: Civil rights activist Jimmie Lee Jackson dies after being shot by state police in Marion, Alabama.
<b>27</b> 1897: Marian Anderson, world-renowned opera singer and civil rights activist, born.	<b>28</b> 1984: Michael Jackson, musician and entertainer, wins eight Grammy Awards.
<b>29</b> 1940: Actress Hattie McDaniel becomes first black to win an Oscar for her role in the movie <i>Gone With the Wind</i> .	