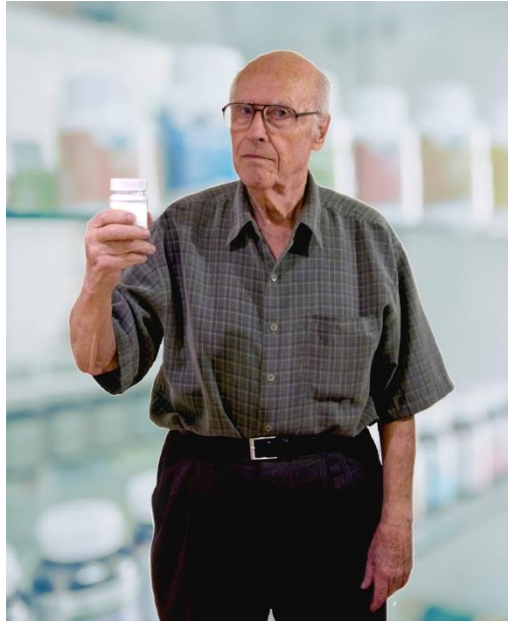


# Elderly Needing to Choose Between Prescriptions and Food

By: Allison Armijo



Seniors, commonly known to possess a breadth of knowledge and wise adages, should have to worry about grandchildren or themselves, not choosing between prescriptions and food. This common issue plagues many elderly men and women in America today. This unfortunate problem not only reveals the hardships faced by that community, but sheds light on how they are forced to deal with these issues. This predicament of needing to choose between health and well, health forces seniors between a rock and a hard place. How are they meant to deal with such mental and physical issues? Do they have families that can help them through these challenging times, or are they on their own?

For many dealing with this struggle, they are alone and struggling financially so they do not have the option for both produce and medications. Kathy Birkett, author of *Senior Care Corner*, asserts how, “Decisions in seniors’ days should include what they will wear, what they will eat for lunch or if they’d rather go to the park or the library — not whether to buy food or their blood pressure medication.” Birkett is correct in her assessment of daily lives of seniors by establishing that life of a senior should be relaxing, not stressful and worrisome about where their next meals come from. Birkett continues her examination of the issue by explaining how, “Medications are expensive. Whether your senior is covered under a Part D medication plan or another plan that covers their medications, the reality is that more and more of the prescription drugs they need are not being covered.” Because most seniors are retired or do not work strenuous daily jobs, they lack the financial stability to be able to pay for expensive medications and prescriptions. Unfortunately, this can lead to generic medications and therefore ineffective results. Although this is not saying that generic medicines are ineffective overall, more than often they lack the wherewithal to effectively combat specific issues that seniors possess.

This issue combated by most elders is also discussed and assessed in an article by Paul Buchheit, contributor to *Salon.com*. Buchheit gives a specific example of this problem which was faced by real people living in Detroit. He explains how, “...74-year-old Willie Smith saw her monthly SNAP benefits cut from \$73 to \$57. Also in Detroit, 63-year-old J.B. Hillman-Rushell and her 83-year-old mother were going to four different church food pantries for nearly all of their food.” This unfortunate account of lack of financial reliability shows how some families are forced to go to food pantries to buy their food, which further implies how seldom some are able to afford medications. Oftentimes medications and prescriptions are more expensive than food, forcing people to resort to purchasing whatever food they can, and relying on what little money they have left for medications.

However, this can work the other way around. Whatever elders and their families deem most important, that is most likely what they will purchase first.

Therefore, the depressing issue of elders needing to choose between prescriptions and food plagues many families, and individuals, in America by forcing them to choose between two different spectrums of health.

#### Resources

<http://seniorcarecorner.com/critical-medications-or-food-seniors-choose>

[https://www.salon.com/2015/06/03/america\\_despises\\_its\\_elderly\\_why\\_seniors\\_have\\_to\\_choose\\_between\\_food\\_and\\_medicine\\_partner/](https://www.salon.com/2015/06/03/america_despises_its_elderly_why_seniors_have_to_choose_between_food_and_medicine_partner/)