Despite the fact that all medications including natural remedies and over-the-counter drugs carry some degree of risk, our desire to avoid risk tends to be especially intense when it comes to prescription drugs. We simply don't know what information to trust. And who can blame us when consumer advocates, politicians, and trial lawyers are quick to capitalize on the latest sensational media headlines alleging that your medications may be unsafe? Media hype can unnecessarily intensify our fear and intolerance of even small, highly-improbable risks, and lead us to discard our pills. Unfortunately, doing so can subject us to far greater health risks such as pain, disability, or even death.

In this brochure, the American Council on Science and Health (ACSH) will attempt to alleviate the widespread anxiety about prescription drug safety by revealing misperceptions about risk.

This publication is based on the peer-reviewed paper written for ACSH by Steven Marks, *Weighing Benefits and Risks in Pharmaceutical Use: A Consumer's Guide* and was adapted by Aubrey Stimola.

What's the Story? Weighing the Benefits and Risks of Your Medications

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