Don’t Scare Me

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By MIKE AUERBACH, Editor in Chief, *Pharmaceutical Processing*

The use of scare tactics to sell product is not new. I would venture to guess that, when the first cave dweller figured out how to make fire, he or she probably used scare tactics to sell the first fire-making kit. “Use my fire-making kit or you die from the cold.” (Feel free to use your best caveman voice when reading the previous sentence.)

Nowadays, scare tactics are designed to make you feel inadequate, unsafe or just plain stupid if you don’t buy the product or service being hawked. I would hope most consumers know when they are being scared into buying something, but I will be the first to admit that I have bought a product or two after being scared into the purchase.

This is all fine when you are watching TV or on the Internet, and you are subject to scare tactics. But what happens when you are in your local outpost of a national chain pharmacy picking up your prescription?

Every three months I pick up my supply of metformin. This is a relatively easy procedure. It’s on automated refill — I don’t even have to call up — I just go in and pick it up when I’m just about out of it.

The last time I went in expecting the same thing, only to be told by the pharmacy technician that the pharmacist would like to speak to me. So I walked over to the consultation area and was soon joined by the pharmacist who informed me that “many diabetics also have high blood pressure and high cholesterol. Would you like me to make a note in your file to call your doctor to discuss adding blood pressure and cholesterol medication to your diabetes care program?”

Whoa! I’ve never been encountered this kind of scare tactic in a pharmacy before. I politely declined the offer as I know my blood pressure and cholesterol are fine — thank you very much.

The whole experience was a bit off-putting. Was the pharmacist really looking out for my best interests or just trying to sell more product? I'll probably never find out.

What do you think?

What’s your take? Please feel free to leave a comment below.

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