

Taking Your Medicines Correctly



Did You Know...?

A person taking their medicines incorrectly is a major public health problem and contributes to the high cost of health care¹. It is estimated that about 50% of patients stop taking prescribed medicines before their doctor intended. Many medicines are now available to help treat conditions like high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, schizophrenia, and depression. However, if persons do not take their medicines correctly, their health problems may get worse.

Ask yourself these questions to see if you take medicines correctly:

- Did you ever get a prescription from your doctor and not have it filled?
- Did you ever skip taking a dose of your medicine?
- Did you ever stop taking your medicine because you "felt better"?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you may not be getting the full benefit from your medicine.

What can you do...?

- Understand how the doctor wants you to take the medicine and take it exactly as prescribed.
- If you have questions about your medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist.
- Write down any instructions from your doctor or pharmacist.
- Take your medicine at the same time each day or with an activity you do daily.
- Find ways to help remember when to take your medicine:

For example: when you brush your teeth, with meals, or at bedtime

- Tell a friend or spouse about your medicine schedule and he or she can help you remember.
- Keep your medicine where you will remember to take it, BUT DO NOT LEAVE IT WITHIN THE REACH OF CHILDREN!
- Use a daily planner and check it off after taking your medicine.
- Don't skip your medicine because you are feeling well and think you no longer need it.
- Be alert for possible side effects and report them promptly.
- Know what foods, drinks, other medicines, or activities to avoid.
- Get refills of your prescription before you run out; plan ahead for weekends or holidays.

Be sure to know these things for every medicine you take...

It's name	Why you are taking it	How much to take
How often to take it	When to take it each day	Where to store it
How long to take it for	What the side effects might be	

Always...

If you have a problem or any questions, call your provider or pharmacist!!!

(1) Vermeire E et al. Patient adherence to treatment: three decades of research. A comprehensive review. *J Clin Pharm Ther.* 2001; 26:331-42.