

# Medication Adherence



## Why should I take my medications?

Taking your medicine as prescribed is important for controlling chronic conditions, treating temporary conditions, and overall long-term health and well-being.

### 5 Reasons Patients Don't Take Their Medications:

- **Fear:** Patients may be frightened of potential side effects. They may have witnessed or heard of side effects experienced by someone else who was taking the same or similar medications.
- **Cost:** Patients may not fill their medications or ration what they do have to extend their supply.
- **Misunderstanding:** Patients may not understand the need for a medication, the nature of the side effects, or the time it takes to see results. This is particularly true for patients with chronic illness because taking a medication every day to reduce the risk of something bad happening can be confusing. Failure to see immediate improvements may lead to premature discontinuation.
- **Too Many Medications:** The greater the number of medications prescribed and the higher the dosing frequency, the more likely a patient is to be non-adherent.
- **Worry:** Concerns about becoming dependent on medication can also lead to non-adherence.

### Ways to Improve Medication Adherence:

- **Fear:** Do not be afraid to ask questions about your medication. Remember, your Primary Care Provider has weighed your options and decided this medication is best for you.
- **Cost:** There are many programs available for most income levels, such as patient assistance programs, Good RX, and local community resources. Communicate any concerns affording your medications with your Primary Care Provider.
- **Misunderstanding:** Get educated. Ask questions like, "How long will it take for me to notice a difference?" and, "Why do I need this medication?" Let your Primary Care Provider know if you are not seeing any benefits from taking your medications.
- **Too Many Medications:** If you are struggling to take your medication as prescribed, talk to your Primary Care Provider about medication planning options.
- **Worry:** If you have concerns about taking your medications, ask your Primary Care Provider about alternatives, such as lifestyle changes.

### Helpful Tips and Tricks

1. Take your medication at the same time every day.
2. Keep a "medicine calendar" with your pill bottles and note each time you take a dose.
3. Link taking your medications to a daily routine like brushing your teeth or getting ready for bed. When considering a routine, check if your medications should be taken on a full or empty stomach.
4. Use a pill planner. Some planners have alarms and sections for multiple doses at different times, such as morning, lunch, evening, and night. Consider refilling your pill planner at the same time each week. For example, every Sunday morning after breakfast.
5. Determine if you can have pre-dose packs delivered to you. This is easy, convenient, and can reduce human error.
6. When traveling, prepare to bring enough medication for your trip, plus a few days extra in case your return home is delayed.