



# UNDERSTANDING MEDICATION ADHERENCE

**Medication adherence** means taking your medication exactly as directed by your physician – whether it’s in a pill form, inhaled, injected or applied to the skin.



Some people do not take their medications as directed by their doctors. Some people never fill their prescriptions. Others don’t follow their doctor’s directions – they skip doses or stop taking their medicine.

Medication non-adherence is a widespread problem, costing us lives and dollars. Understanding your condition and taking your medicine correctly are important steps toward a longer, healthier life.

## Know why taking your medications correctly is good for you.

### IT’S GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH



If you don’t take your medications exactly as prescribed, you might be putting your health at risk.

Research has shown higher rates of death for people who stopped taking their medications, or didn’t take them as advised by their doctors. People who don’t take their medications after they leave the hospital are more likely to end up back in the hospital than those who do.<sup>1</sup>

### IT’S GOOD FOR YOUR BUDGET



If you don’t take your medications as prescribed by your doctor, you’re putting your financial health at risk, too.

A recent study showed that patients with diabetes and high blood pressure saved thousands of dollars each year on other health care costs when they took their medications as prescribed.<sup>2</sup>

## Know what you can do.

If you take your medications correctly, you’re much more likely to gain the health benefits they provide and enjoy a better quality of life.

Follow these tips to help you stay on top of taking your medication:

#### 1 WRITE IT DOWN



Create a chart that shows all the medications you take, how much to take and when to take them during the day.

#### 2 GET ORGANIZED



Use a pillbox to lay out your prescription drugs for a week at a time. And keep your medications in one safe place, such as a kitchen cabinet.

#### 3 MAKE IT A HABIT



Take your medication at the same time every day.

#### 4 SET UP REMINDERS



Arrange for a friend or family member to call you at the same time every day. Or set an alarm clock.

#### 5 MAKE REFILLS EASIER



Find out if your pharmacy can give you a 90-day supply so you don’t have to get refills as often.



#### REFERENCES

1. "Take Meds Faithfully," *Consumer Reports Shopper's Guide to Prescription Drugs* (No. 7), 2007.
2. "Medication Adherence Leads To Lower Health Care Use And Costs Despite Increased Drug Spending," *Health Affairs*, January 2011.

**SOURCE:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012.

This information does not substitute for the medical advice, diagnosis or treatment of your physician. Always talk to your physician or a qualified health care provider about any questions you may have regarding your medical condition.

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