

Prescription Medicines: To Take or Not to Take

When your doctor prescribes medicine to you, do you delay filling the prescription? Do you skip doses, forget to take them on time, split the pills, or even stop the medicine early?

Medication adherence is the degree to which patients take their medicines correctly. If you do not take medicines as your doctor directed, you may be worsening your chronic condition, leading to greater complications from the illness, more hospitalizations, and a lower overall quality of life.

Why should I take my medicine as my doctor has directed?


Many medicines take time to reach a level in your body to work most effectively. If you take your medicine as your doctor directed and stick to a consistent regimen when taking your medicine, you are helping to:

- Maintain the best possible health for yourself
- Protect yourself against future illness or serious health complications
- Manage and control your health condition
- Effectively treat temporary conditions
- Improve your overall long-term health, well-being and quality of life.

Your prescription has a purpose!

- Hyperlipidemia (high cholesterol) does not hurt... until you have a stroke.
- Hypertension (high blood pressure) does not hurt... until you have a heart attack.
- Diabetes does not hurt.... until your kidneys fail.

What should I do if I want to stop taking my medicine?



Stopping your medicines abruptly may not only cause your condition to worsen, it can also be dangerous.

BEFORE you stop taking your medicine, **talk to your doctor.** Tell your doctor why you do not want to take the medicine:

- Do you have concerns about taking the medicine?
- Are you having trouble paying for it?
- Does it bother you to take it every day?
- Do you think you are able to deal with your health without medicine?
- Are others saying you do not need medicine or should not take it?

There may be other things you can do, such as change the timing of when you take the medicine or find a different medicine altogether. Your pharmacist can help you to simplify your treatment plan, if needed.

Make sure you are stopping for the right reasons. Your doctor will support you to find a way to keep you healthy.



Top 10 Reasons Why People Do Not Take Their Prescribed Medicines

Reasons	Keep in mind...
I feel okay, so I don't need to take my medicine.	Do not stop taking your medicine because you are feeling okay. Feeling good does not mean that your illness is cured.
I do not feel them working.	It may take time for some medicines to reach a level in your body to work most effectively. You may not feel the medicine working, but they are helping.
I'm not sure I really need them.	If you are not sure, share your concerns with your doctor first. Ask them if you need the treatment and what it is for.
There are too many side effects.	If you are feeling worse, or the medicine's side effects are bothering you, talk with your doctor or pharmacist first about what you can do to lessen the effects.
I did not remember...	If you often forget to fill your prescriptions, how to take them, or what time to take them, talk with your doctor or pharmacist first about what can make it easier to remember.
I'm afraid to take medicines.	Learn about the potential side effects and how long they will last. This also includes understanding if they can cause addiction.
The medicine costs too much.	If you are not able to pay for your prescribed medicines, ask your doctor or pharmacist what supports are available to you.
I am not able to physically take them.	If you have physical limitations and find it difficult to take your medicines, talk with your pharmacist and doctor for ideas.
I have too many medicines.	Your doctor or pharmacist can help to make sure your treatment plan is easy to follow.
Natural supplements are better than prescription medicine.	While some supplements have clear uses, such as Vitamin D and calcium to improve bone health, most do not. Prescription medicines go through more scrutiny than natural supplements and vitamins. As a result, prescription medicines are more effective than most natural supplements and vitamins.