

TAKING MEDICATIONS APPROPRIATELY





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If you have chronic medical conditions, it is important to take your medications correctly, so that you minimize your risk of complications or worsening of your condition.


Taking medications as prescribed sounds easy enough, so why don't people do it?


 Cost: The cost of medications can be a significant burden for many people. Often, the cost of medications is high, which can create barriers if it is no longer affordable.

 Complexity of medication regime: as the number and frequency of medications increase, it becomes more and more difficult to remember what to take when.

 Unclear understanding of medication purpose: managing chronic health conditions requires an understanding of the condition, including medication importance. People who don't receive education from their medical providers are less likely to take medications as prescribed.

How can these problems be addressed?

 Cost: Know your prescription coverage. If you have questions, call your pharmacy benefits manager. Talk with your provider if certain medications are causing cost issues. There may be alternatives that your provider could order instead. Also, see if there are any discount programs from the pharmaceutical company for your medication. Finally, check savings programs such as GoodRx, Singlecare, or HelpRx to see if these may save you as well.

 Medication regime confusion: talk to your provider or pharmacist about your medications to make sure you understand how to take them. If you are having problems remembering to take your medications, try the following:

- Keep medications where you can see them
- Set up a medication box or see if your pharmacy will do it. You can ask them to pre-package medication taken at the same time together.
- When you take a medicine, flip the bottle over so you know you've taken it.
- Set an alarm on a watch or phone as a reminder.
- To remember to refill your medications, mark the refill date on a calendar or set up an auto-refill with your pharmacy.

 Understanding your care:

- If you can, take someone you trust with you to your doctor's appointments. They can take notes, remind you of what questions you want to ask your provider, and help you keep track of answers.
- Before you make any changes to your medication, talk to your doctor first. Some medications have specific requirements to change or stop them safely.
- Be realistic about what the medications can and can't do for you. Talk to your provider about the goals of the treatments.

SOURCES:

- <https://www.childrensmemory.org/siteassets/media-documents-for-depts-section/departments/gastroenterology/ibd/ibd-remembering-medication.pdf>
- <https://online.nursing.georgetown.edu/blog/improving-medication-adherence-in-older-adults/>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/wr/mm6645a2.htm>