



Medication Adherence

Sticking to your medication routine (or medication adherence) means taking your medications as prescribed – the right dose, the right way, at the right time.

Reasons to take medications as prescribed:

Know your own motivations for why you want to take this medication.

- Is it to improve your quality of life? Improve health outcomes? Slow disease progression? Whatever your motivations are, it's important to establish your goals early on in therapy and discuss them with your healthcare team to ensure your medication is appropriate for you.

Not taking your medications as prescribed leads to higher health costs per year.

- Approximately one in five new prescriptions are never filled, and among those filled, approximately 50% are taken incorrectly, particularly with regard to timing, dosage, frequency, and duration. Whereas rates of non-adherence across the United States have remained relatively stable, direct health care costs associated with non-adherence have grown to approximately \$100–\$300 billion of U.S. health care dollars spent annually. Improving medication adherence is a public health priority and could reduce the economic and health burdens of many diseases and chronic conditions.
- In the United States, medication nonadherence causes about 125,000 deaths and at least 10% of hospitalizations and 23% of nursing home admissions annually.

Tips for taking medications as prescribed:

If you don't understand, ASK.

- PANTHERx Pharmacists are here to help you and ensure you see the most benefits from your therapy.

Are you struggling to see why taking this medication as prescribed is so important?

- Call your PANTHERx Pharmacist. We will review the goals of therapy for this medication and what you can expect from your therapy.

Having trouble seeing your medication instructions?

- Give PANTHERx Pharmacists a call anytime to read your prescription instructions. We can help you day and night.

Do you take multiple medications with varying directions?

- Try using a pillbox to help get yourself organized if your medication doesn't require storage in its original container.
- If using a pillbox for other medications, but one requires storage in its original packaging, consider placing a note with your pillbox to remind you to take that medication.
- Bring your pillbox into your local pharmacy and they can help you fill the medications into the correct compartment (or consider asking a friend/family member for help).

Having difficulty remembering to take your medication(s)?

- A pillbox can help you here too.
- Taking your medications at the same time every day helps to establish a routine.
 - *Some pillboxes have timer functions to alert you to take your medication.*
 - *Try setting calendar alarms or reminders on your phone to alert you for when you should take your medication.*
 - *Consider purchasing timer caps for your pill bottles and set them to go off when your next dose is due.*
 - *Store your medications in a convenient location to help you remember to take them. For example, if you are to take your medication in the morning, try keeping it next to the coffee machine or your toothbrush.*
 - *If you need to take your medication at home and somewhere else, like the office, as soon as you get your new prescription, determine how many doses you will need to take at the office and how many at home. This will help you to remember to pack and take your medications every day whether you are home or away from home.*
 - *Tie taking your medications with a daily routine (like brushing teeth or getting ready for bed).*
- Ensure you check if your medication should be taken at a certain time of day or taken with or without food.

Does traveling cause you to forget to take your medications?

- Always be certain to include medications on your travel preparation checklist.
- Bring enough medications, plus a few days extra, in case your return is delayed.
- Do you plan on flying?
 - *Remember to pack your medication in your carry-on baggage in case your luggage is lost or need for easy access.*

Having trouble taking/swallowing your medications?

- Ask your PANTHERx pharmacist what you can do to help make medication taking easier.
Note: It's always important to ask before crushing your medication or mixing it with food/drink – there may be another formulation available for you (e.g. liquid vs tablet).

*** Remember to always keep medications stored at the appropriate temperature.**

Neiman AB, Rupart T, Ho M, Garber T, Weidle PJ, Hong Y, et al. CDC Grand Rounds: Improving Medication Adherence for Chronic Disease Management – Innovation and Opportunities. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2017; 66. DOI <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6645a2>.

Sign up for PANTHERx texting reminders to alert you for when you are coming due to refill your medication.



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