



Did You Take Your Medication Today?

More than 60 percent of adults take one medication and 22 percent of adults take five or more. Prescribed medication can help us protect our health and our future, especially for those who have chronic conditions.

Unfortunately, 75 percent of prescriptions are taken incorrectly. Former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop once said, “Drugs don’t work if patients don’t take them.” Not taking medication as directed can have serious consequences. It can lead to higher rates of hospital admissions, increased health care costs, illness and even death.

For patients with chronic conditions, not taking medication correctly can cause serious health complications. For example, not taking your blood pressure medication means you are not managing your blood pressure, which can lead to heart disease, stroke and kidney failure.

There are many reasons why a person might not take his or her prescription medication as directed, including:

- Inability to pay.
- Undesirable side effects.
- Difficulty keeping track of multiple medications or a complicated dosing schedule.
- Not understanding how and when to take the medication.
- Not believing the treatment is necessary or working.

Communication is key

Talk to your health care professional if you are having trouble taking your medication as prescribed, no matter the reason. If paying is a problem, your doctor may be able to prescribe a generic medication or offer another suggestion. If side effects are bothering you, you may be able to switch medications or adjust the timing of your dose. If you don’t understand the directions for taking your medication, ask your doctor or pharmacist for help.

Create habits to help you remember

If you have difficulty remembering to take your medication or keeping track of your medication schedule, here are some tips to help:

- **Make it part of your daily routine.** Incorporate taking your medication into part of your daily habits. Make it part of your morning routine, take it when you are eating a certain meal every day, or take your medication just before bed. This will make it easier to remember.
- **Keep it visible.** Storing your medication in a cabinet or drawer can make it easier for it to slip your mind. Put it somewhere you will see it. If you take your medication with dinner, put it on the dinner table or in the kitchen.
- **Use a daily dosing container.** If you take multiple medications, this type of container can help. No more wondering whether you’ve taken your medications for the day.
- **Make a dosing schedule to keep track.** Whether it is written or electronic, having a schedule at your fingertips can make a complicated dosing regimen more manageable. You may also be able to set reminders on your cell phone to prompt you when it’s time to take your medication.

Medicine is prescribed to help you. However, you can’t get the benefits from it if you don’t take it correctly. It’s important to find what works best for you to help you take your medication as prescribed.

