

# Tips to help you get the most out of your medications

If you have been prescribed a medication to treat a medical condition, such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure or diabetes, it's important to take your medication correctly and consistently.

## Why should I take my medicine?

- Cholesterol medications can reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke by 30-60%.
- Blood pressure medications can reduce the risk of heart attack by 20-25% and stroke by 35-40%.
- Diabetes medications can reduce the risk of nerve pain, vision loss and kidney damage by 40%.

**Here are common reasons** why patients don't take their medications:

## "I sometimes forget to take it"

### SOLUTIONS:

- Use a pill box. Fill it once a week so you can look back to see if you took your daily dose.
- Mark a calendar when you take your medication.
- Set an alarm.
- Store your medication in an obvious place, like near your coffee maker.
- Pick a time of day that fits best into your schedule.
- Talk with your pharmacist. They may be able to help with refill reminders, auto-refills or even special packaging to help you remember.



## "I can't afford my medication"

### SOLUTIONS:

- Talk with your doctor. Many brand name medications have generic alternatives that are as safe and effective as the brand name but available for a lower cost.
- You may be eligible for New York State's Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC) program, which provides Medicare beneficiaries with copayment assistance for their Medicare Part D covered prescription drugs. For more information, visit [www.health.ny.gov](http://www.health.ny.gov) or call the toll-free EPIC Helpline at **1-800-332-3742**, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. TTY users can call 1-800-290-9138.

## "I feel worse when I take my medication"

### SOLUTIONS:

- You could be experiencing a side effect. Call your doctor right away.
- Maybe your dose is too high. Your doctor may lower your dose or prescribe a different medication.
- What you are feeling could also be unrelated to your medication. For example, muscle aches could be from too much physical activity.



## "I have trouble getting to my pharmacy to pick up my medication"

### SOLUTIONS:

- Ask your pharmacist about home delivery options.
- Your pharmacist might be able to synchronize your prescription refills, which may allow you to get all your medications at the same time.
- See if your doctor can write your prescriptions as a 90-day supply so that you only have to pick up your medication every three months.

**Remember, drugs don't work in patients who don't take them.** In order to receive the maximum benefit of the drug and improve your chances for a healthier future, make sure you follow directions and take them as prescribed.

