

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 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.

