

# THE PROACTIVE

## A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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Medication Adherence

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### Communication Is Key

#### *Communicate with your healthcare professional.*

If medication side effects are bothering you, talk with your doctor or pharmacist about what you can do to lessen the problem. You might be able to switch to a different medication or your doctor may be able to adjust the timing of your dose.

Make sure you understand how long to take the medication. Some questions to ask when you're prescribed a new medication are:

- Is it necessary to empty the bottle, or can I stop taking this medication once I feel better?
- Will I need to get a refill, or can I stop treatment when the bottle is empty?

Tell your doctor if paying for prescription drugs is a problem. Your doctor may be able to prescribe a generic medication or offer other suggestions to offset the cost of a drug.

### There's An App For That

Thanks to modern technology, there are a number of apps that have been designed to help patients adhere to a prescribed medication schedule.

#### ■ **Pill Reminder and Medication Tracker by Medisafe** (free)

This medicine reminder can help manage numerous people's medications thanks to multiple profiles. It also tracks your prescriptions and reminds you when it's time for a refill. It's the highest rated and most downloaded medicine reminder on the Apple store. ★★★★★

#### ■ **Mango Health Medication Reminder** (free)

This app features a schedule for creating reminders, drug interaction warnings, refill alerts, and a diary. But the real standout is the incentive points system; take your medication and earn points, earn enough and you could win prizes. ★★★★★



## Medication Adherence

Medication adherence is generally defined as the extent to which patients take medication as prescribed by their doctors. This involves factors such as getting prescriptions filled, remembering to take medication on time, and understanding the directions.

When a patient chooses not to take their medication appropriately, they increase their chances of hospital admission, loss of work days, or even death. According to the American Heart Association, poor medication adherence takes the lives of 125,000 Americans annually.<sup>1</sup>

Common barriers to medication adherence include:

- the inability to pay for medications
- disbelief that the treatment is necessary or helping
- difficulty keeping up with multiple medications and complex dosing schedules
- confusion about how and when to take the medication

Whether one or a combination of these reasons is the source of non-adherence, the potential benefit of the medication could be missed.

1. Medication Adherence – Taking Your Meds as Directed. American Heart Association. [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org)

### 8 Quick Tips

1. Take your medication at the same exact time every day, consistently.
2. Make taking the medication a daily routine, just like brushing your teeth before going to bed.
3. Utilize a calendar with times and dosages to take medications.
4. Use a pill container with dividers for medications to be taken at different times of the day.
5. Make sure that you refill the pill container on a routine schedule, so that you'll never miss a dosage.
6. Utilize timer caps for when the desired medication needs to be taken.
7. When traveling, make sure that you take enough medication with you (and then some) in case there is a delay.
8. If you are flying, make sure that you put your medication in a carry-on bag to avoid extreme temperatures and conditions and ensure it is not lost in cargo.