

Medication Management

As an active self-care manager, you must do everything you can to manage your condition, while still enjoying life to the fullest. And that includes managing the medications you take. But it can be difficult – you may take many different medications and they can be complicated. Here are some tips that may help managing your medications a little easier.

First, remember that your healthcare provider has prescribed the medication to you for a reason. It may not cure your long-term health problems, but it may:

Reduce your symptoms. This can help you feel better day to day and overall. Prevent or delay the progression of the disease and other health problems that may be a result of the condition. Provide your body with something it no longer produces but needs.

Taking the medications, your healthcare provider has prescribed is good for you. Just be sure to take them exactly as directed to ensure you are getting all the benefits they can provide. If you have questions about how they are supposed to be taken, or have trouble following the directions, talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist. They can help you find the best way to take them, so you don't miss a dose.

If you feel there may be other obstacles to taking your medications as directed, talk to your healthcare provider. For example, medications can be expensive. If you feel you won't be able to fill a prescription, or even take the medication on a regular basis because of cost, your healthcare provider may be able to prescribe a less expensive alternative that may work just as well.

Often when you have more than one long-term health problem or suffer from more than one symptom, you may be prescribed more than one medication. Don't rely on your memory to make sure you have taken all your medications; develop a system so that you can feel confident you are taking all of your medications as directed.

Some people use a calendar to remember when to take their medications. Others prefer to use a pill organizer. Some set an alarm on their phone or tablet to remind them to take their medications. However, you choose to manage your medications, make sure it works for your lifestyle.

It is a good idea to take an updated list of all the medications you are taking and their current doses to each healthcare visit. If you can't take a list, take the bottles of medications with you. And remember to include all vitamins and herbal supplements. Your healthcare provider needs a complete picture of all of the medications you are taking in order to treat your complete health picture.

All medications can have side effects. If you do experience side effects, do not stop taking your medications until you discuss your concerns with your healthcare provider or pharmacist. Some side effects may go away with time,

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may be manageable, or there may be a different medication option available for you. If you do feel you must stop a medication because of severe side effects, call your doctor immediately.

Some severe reactions may require emergency treatment. If you experience:

Trouble breathing

Seizures

Weak or fast heart rate

Nausea or vomiting

Or dizziness or lightheadedness

Call 911 and get help immediately.

And finally, make sure to fill all of your prescriptions at the same pharmacy. Your pharmacy can check your file and make sure there are no potential problems with any of the medications you are taking.

Medications can help you take an active role in managing your long-term health conditions and help you relieve any symptoms that can be getting in the way of doing the things you enjoy. But you must take them properly to ensure that they work as they are meant to.

Remember to:

Take your medications exactly as prescribed.

Develop a system so you remember to take your medications.

Take an updated list of medications with you to every healthcare appointment.

Talk to your healthcare provider about side effects and obstacles to taking your medications.

And fill all of your prescriptions at the same pharmacy.

Talk to your healthcare team today if you have questions or concerns about the medications you take. They are there to help.