

Managing Your Heart Failure Medications

No matter what types of medications you take for your heart failure, they will only work if you take them as prescribed.

There may be days when you don't feel like you need to take your medications. However, if you stop taking them, your symptoms may return or get worse, so take them every day.

A medication plan can help.

Your medication plan will include a schedule for when to take your medication.

Take it at the same time each day.

"I actually plug it into my phone so that I remind myself to take my medication."

Keeping a medication log can help. This can be a written journal, a calendar, or you can use an app. Some mobile apps will even remind you when it's time to take your meds.

Record every time you take a medication in your medication log. This will help keep you on track.

Using a pillbox is a helpful way to organize your medications. It separates your medications for specific times and days of the week.

Some "smart" pillboxes will even let you and your healthcare provider know if you have missed a dose.

"Every week me and my wife would sit down and we would put all the medication in. And that way in the morning times I do is just grab a little packet, and I was ready to go."

Remembering to take your medications gets easier as you make taking them a part of your daily routine. For example, if you have a morning medication, you can remind yourself to take it when you brush your teeth every morning.

If you miss a dose let your healthcare provider know. Never try to make up the missing dose on your own by "double dosing".

And make sure you are taking the correct prescribed dosage.

Make a list of your current medications and carry this list with you so you can refer to it quickly.

Take this list to all your healthcare appointments.

"I try to keep a medication list with my allergies listed as well."

And talk to your healthcare provider before starting any new medication, be it over-the-counter cold or pain relievers, a new prescription, or even a new vitamin, nutritional supplement or herb.

Any of these may interfere with your heart failure medications and some can even make your heart failure symptoms worse.

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If possible, have your prescriptions filled at one pharmacy, either in store or online.

That way your pharmacist knows about all your medications.

Review your prescription before having it filled. If it has changed talk to your doctor to make sure it is correct.

Plan to go get your prescription filled a few days early so you won't run out.

Medications may be expensive. If you are worried about the cost of medications, talk to your healthcare team. There may be generic versions that are less expensive.

You also may qualify for a program that can help you get them at a reduced cost.

And if you experience side effects from your medications let your healthcare provider know. Your healthcare provider may be able to adjust your prescription or change the specific medication to reduce your side effects.

Taking your medications as prescribed is one of the most important things you can do to help control your heart failure symptoms. If you have questions about your medications and how to manage them, talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist.