



Managing Your Prescription Medications

American Stroke Association



What are Medication Adherence & Medication Compliance?

It's important to understand the difference between medication adherence and medication compliance.

Medication adherence is the act of filling new prescription or refilling prescriptions on time.

Medication compliance is the act of taking medication on schedule or taking medications as prescribed.



Reasons for Not Taking Your Medications as Directed

- You forget to take your pills or forget to fill your prescription.
- You are concerned over the rising cost of your prescription medication.
- You are unsure if the medication you are taking is effective.
- You have side effects or difficulties taking your medications.
- You “feel fine” and dismiss your need to take medications.
- Getting your medications requires multiple trips to the pharmacy.

It is absolutely necessary for your health care professional to have an accurate profile of your medication use. Take an active role and tell your doctor and pharmacist about your experiences with your medications.

Results of Medication Non-adherence

- Higher rates of hospital admissions
- Decline in quality of life
- Increased morbidity and mortality
- Increased health care costs

Not taking medications as prescribed costs about \$300 billion in additional medical bills each year.



Only 1 out of every 4 people in the U.S. takes their medications as directed.

This leads to 125,000 unnecessary deaths every year.



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Coping Techniques

It's important to follow your health care professionals' instructions when taking medications.

Prescription medications can't work if people don't take them.



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Coping Techniques

Take your medications at the same time every day and link them to some other activity you do daily, such as brushing your teeth.



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Coping Techniques

If you take several pills, use a pill box to organize them. Use a medication tracking chart or an alarm to help remind you to take your medications.



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Coping Techniques

If your medications cost too much, talk to your doctor or pharmacist about lower cost options.

Ask if you can take generic drugs.

Ask about discount programs and coupons.



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Coping Techniques

**Take your medications as prescribed —
don't stop or take less without talking with your doctor first.**



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Coping Techniques

If taking your medications is not making you feel well, be sure to talk to your doctor. They may switch you to a different medication. Make sure to follow directions; for example, some medications need to be taken with food.



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Coping Techniques

Fill all your prescriptions at the same pharmacy, so your pharmacist knows everything you're taking.



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Pharmacy

Prescription Medication

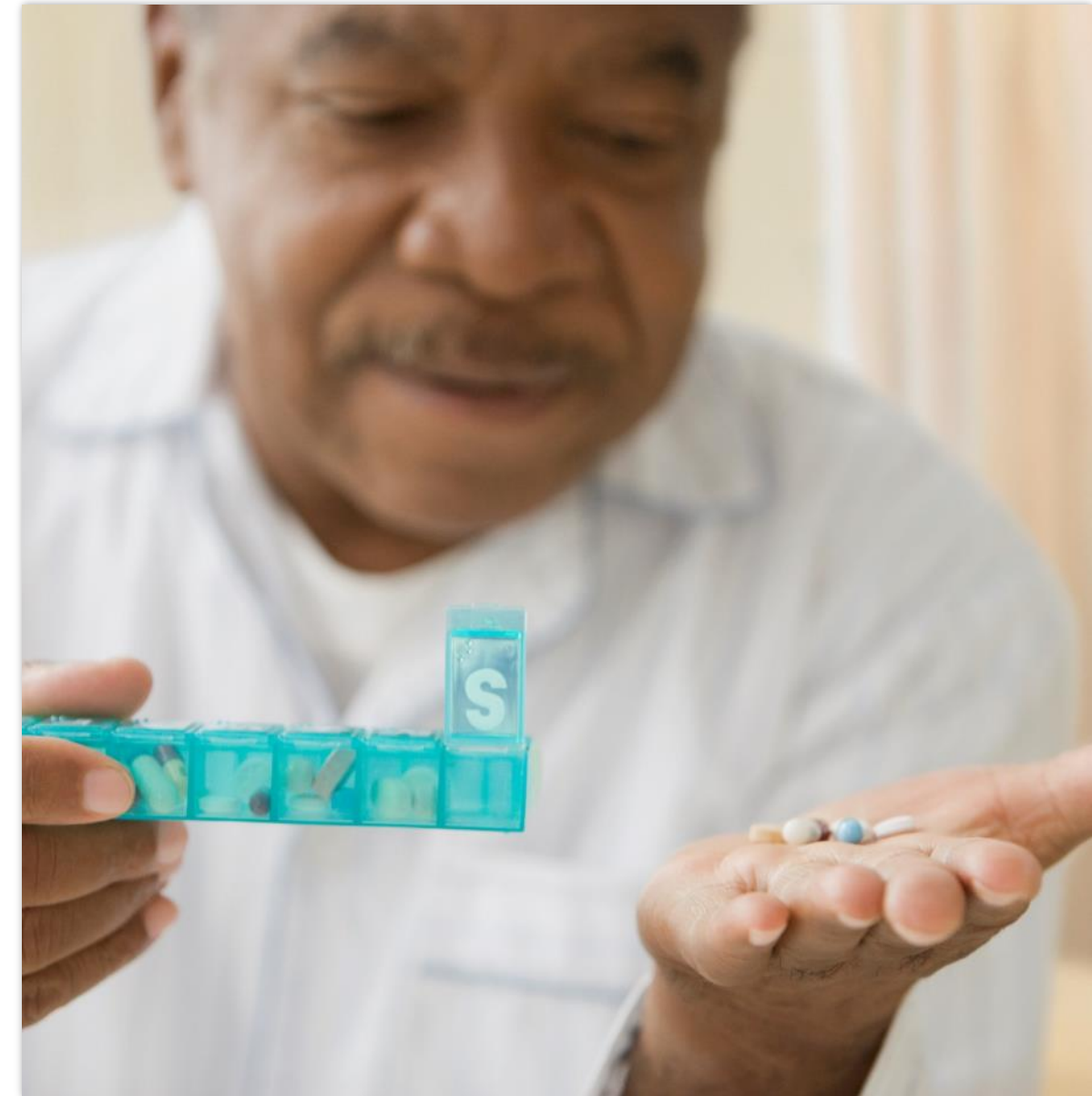
TAKE 1 TABLET TWICE
A DAY AS NEEDED

Coping Techniques

**Ask to get your medications on the same refill schedule,
which will make it easier to manage your medications.**

- **Taking medications as prescribed** is central to recovery post-stroke and recurrent stroke prevention.
- **Treatment to prevent future strokes can be tailored to individual situations.** Work with your doctor through a shared decision process to decide on the best treatment plan. This plan should take into consideration your wishes, goals, concerns and circumstances.

Key Takeaways



Questions to Ask Your Health Care Professional

Be informed by asking specific questions:

- What is the medication's name, what is it for and what does it look like?
- When and how do I take this medication?
- What are the possible side effects?
- When should I expect the medication to start working?
- What do I do if I forget my dose?
- What are the consequences if I stop taking this medication altogether?
- Besides time of day, is there anything else I should know about taking my medications (e.g., on a full stomach, with milk, any drug interactions)?

Talking to Your Health Care Professional

About 1 in 4 stroke survivors will have another.
Reduce your risk by working with your doctor to create a plan that is right for you:

- ✓ Work with your doctor to identify the cause of your stroke.
- ✓ Keep your follow-up appointments.
- ✓ Take your recommended medications and talk to your doctor before making any changes.
- ✓ Manage risk factors, such as high blood pressure or diabetes.
- ✓ Ask your doctor about a formal program to help you live a healthier lifestyle – it should include exercise, education and counseling.





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Group Discussion

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Test Your Knowledge



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What is the difference between medication adherence and medication compliance?





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What has prevented you from taking medications as directed?





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**What do you use to help you remember
to take your medications as directed?**





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What has been your experience in working with your doctor or pharmacist when you've had trouble taking your medications as directed?





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Do you make shared decisions with your doctor?

Do you feel supported and well-informed?





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Do you understand your condition and the medications you are on?

Are you able to talk freely with your doctor about any problems related to your medications?





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For more resources on
medication adherence and
life after stroke, visit
stroke.org