

Medication adherence

Adhering to the medicines your doctor prescribes you is important for maintaining your health and keeping your medical expenses lower in the long-term. “Medication adherence” means to continue taking medication as long as your doctor directs, and to take them as prescribed.



There are three phases of medication adherence:¹

1. Beginning a new medicine

Obtain the medicine from the pharmacy after it's prescribed and begin taking it.

2. Taking the medicine according to doctor's instructions

Take the medication properly, at the prescribed dose, as frequently as prescribed without missing doses or taking extra doses.

3. Stopping the medication

Continue to take the medication until your doctor tells you to stop.

Why is medication adherence important?

Medication adherence can be particularly important for long-term, chronic conditions such as high-cholesterol, diabetes, and high blood pressure. In the case of high-cholesterol, for example, one study showed that 33 – 50% of patients stopped taking their cholesterol medication within a year of it being prescribed, and the consistency at which they took the medication got worse over time.¹

A lack of adherence to medications can lead to higher medical costs, because avoidable medical expenses arise when the patient does not take their medications consistently.¹ Often, patients do not understand the potential serious and long-term consequences of not complying with their treatment.

Why don't patients always adhere to their medications?

There are many reasons why patients don't take their medications as prescribed. Factors include the patient's own motivation, expected treatment results, competing priorities, forgetfulness, inadequate patient education, fear of side effects, and other emotional factors. Other factors that can play a role include side effects experienced by the patient, a desire to take fewer medications, and financial considerations.

Work with your Landmark provider or nurse care manager to find ways to take your medications as prescribed. He or she may contact a Landmark pharmacist for further support.

Each patient has individual reasons for not taking their medications as prescribed.

Landmark can help by creating an individual plan for long-term adherence, including:

- More convenient care
- More health-related information/patient education
- Reminders to continue taking the medicine
- Reinforcement of medical instructions
- Counseling
- Telephone follow-up
- Supportive care¹

REFERENCES:

1. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5846762/>

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(Health Plan Name) (Date) Patient Initials