



ASK THE SOCIAL WORKER: FORGETTING MEDICATIONS

Question: My doctor says my “non-adherence” regarding medications is very serious. I hate to admit that he is correct, but it isn’t intentional on my part. I just don’t know how to remember to take all 12 of my medications daily. Do you have any suggestions?

Answer: You aren’t alone. According to the World Health Organization about 50 percent of people with prescribed medications fail to take them as indicated. Studies also show that “forgetting to take medications” is one of the most common reasons people do not take their medications.

A John Hopkins Medicine Health Alert offers these strategies to remind people to take their medications:

- Use a weekly pillbox with 7 compartments that correspond to the days of the week and times of the day, such as morning, noon, late afternoon and bedtime.
- Leave a note on the refrigerator, bathroom mirror, or wherever you are likely to see it to remind you to take your pills.
- Take medications at the same time every day so it becomes a routine.
- Link taking medications with certain daily activities, such as eating, to help you remember that it is time to take your pills.
- Medical pagers and electronic pill boxes can remind you via a beeping sound that it is time to take your pills.

- Each time you take your medications write them down in a log or on a calendar and include the time you took them. Take this log or calendar with you to medical appointments to show how you have been taking your medications.

These strategies may seem like a lot of trouble to you, so let me assure you that I have seen these strategies be very successful. Keep in mind a consultation with your physician and pharmacist is also extremely important since they are familiar with your medical conditions and medications. I am confident that, like most health care providers, they would like to know more about your struggles to manage your medications and be available to help you. I am sure they are familiar with the strategies mentioned here as well as many more strategies that could possibly help you. Good luck!

Sources: *The Wall Street Journal*, October 21, 2003; “The Real Drug Problem: Forgetting to Take Them,” *John Hopkins Medicine Health Alerts*, www.johnshopkinshealthalerts.com; U.S. Food and Drug Administration, www.fda.gov.

JOKE OF THE MONTH

“Middle age is when your age starts to show around your middle.”

— *Bob Hope, www.basicjokes.com*

Laughter is known to boost the immune system, lower blood pressure, burn calories and release pleasure-inducing chemicals in the brain.

CONTRIBUTORS

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AVOID WEIGHT GAIN BY CONTROLLING MEAL PORTIONS



Today it is more difficult than ever to recognize a sensible meal portion. At restaurants, at the movies, and in our homes, meal portions have gradually increased. We are served portions that tend to be larger than a standard serving and can contain more calories than we think. Larger portions may be appealing, but the extra calories are not since they usually lead to weight gain.

So what should we do? Be aware of the difference between a portion and a standard serving. A portion is the amount of food a person chooses to eat at one time. A standard serving, on the other hand, is a particular unit of measured food as shown on the labels of all packaged foods. Compare portions to standard servings — your “normal” portion might actually be equal to several standard servings.

A standard serving is not necessarily a recommended

portion for everyone, but it does indicate the nutrients and the number of calories in a particular amount of food. Thus, a serving size, instead of a portion, can be used to plan a day’s nutritional requirements and calorie intake.

Standard servings of many foods may easily be compared to everyday items, such as an egg, to help visualize the serving amount without using measuring equipment. For example, a 1/4 cup of raisins, a standard serving size, is also about the size of an egg. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) publishes a brochure, “Just Enough for You,” which includes a chart of everyday objects compared to standard servings of common foods. It also includes other tips to reduce the size of meal portions and help maintain a healthy weight. The brochure is free and it can be obtained by calling (877)946-4627 or visiting NIH at <http://win.niddk.nih.gov>.

Sources: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, www.smallstep.gov; National Institutes of Health, www.win.niddk.nih.gov.

NEW ADDITIONS TO THE MPPAF’S NATIONAL RESOURCE DIRECTORY

Savvy Senior: www.savvysenior.org

This national service provides practical information about a variety of topics that interest many older adults.

The National Association for Home Care & Hospice: www.nahc.org

This trade association represents the interests of home care agencies and hospice providers. Its Web site provides a free home care/hospice agency locator with over 20,000 listings.

Homeownership Preservation Foundation: www.995hope.org, (888) 995-HOPE

This nonprofit organization provides free telephone or online counseling by HUD approved counselors who are experts in foreclosure prevention.



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“Yours for truth,
even if it interferes
with news.”

— Will Rogers

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

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