

# What is Medication Adherence?

## Medication Adherence -

"sticking to" or taking the medications as planned by your doctor or other medical provider.

## Nonadherence -

"not sticking to" your medication plan can result in worsening of your health, getting admitted to the hospital, and having higher medical costs.

## What do the experts say about nonadherence?



**3 out of every 10**  
new prescriptions  
are never filled at the pharmacy.



**3 out of 4**  
Americans

do not take their medication as they should.

**5 out of 10**  
people



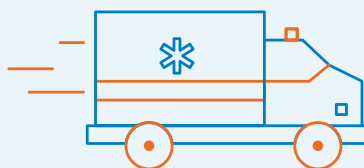
with long-term health conditions stop  
their medication within 6 months.

**125,000**  
Americans

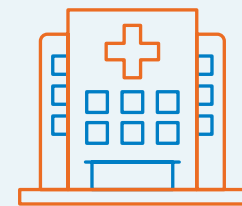
die every year from not taking their medications properly. This costs nearly **\$300 billion** a year in extra:



Doctor visits



Trips to the ER



Admissions to the hospital



**Improving adherence** helps you  
feel better and prevents long-term  
problems with your health conditions.



**Nonadherence** also leads to  
longer hospital stays – more  
than 4 days per admission.

Common Reasons	What You Can Do
<i><b>"It's too expensive"</b></i>	<p><b>Go generic - Ask your doctor or pharmacist if there is a generic medication that's right for you.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The generic medication has the same active ingredient as the brand drug.</li> <li>• Generic medications are safe, FDA approved, and cost less. There may be a lower cost brand.</li> <li>• Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about other options.</li> <li>• Mail Order - Getting prescriptions filled from a mail-order pharmacy may save you money.</li> </ul>
<i><b>"Sometimes I just forget to take it."</b></i>	<p><b>Use easy ways to remember - Make a daily routine and set reminders.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take your medicine at the same time(s) each day.</li> <li>• Put reminders on your calendar.</li> <li>• Use pill boxes that are divided by days and times, reminder alarms on your watch.</li> <li>• You can use free reminder apps for your smartphone.</li> <li>• Make and print your own medication schedules.</li> </ul>
<i><b>"Getting refills is a pain."</b></i> <i><b>"Sometimes I forget to refill them."</b></i>	<p><b>Use mail-order pharmacy - Getting refills is easy and medication is delivered to your door.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reminders can be sent to you when it's time to reorder.</li> <li>• Reorder easily by phone, online, or mail.</li> <li>• Ask your pharmacy about automatic refills.</li> </ul>
<i><b>"I don't like the side effects."</b></i>	<p><b>Talk with your medical provider or pharmacist - Ask about your options.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There may be another medication you can try.</li> <li>• There may be ways to handle your side effects.</li> </ul>
<i><b>"I don't think I need it."</b></i> <i><b>"I feel fine without it."</b></i>	<p><b>Symptoms may be silent - Many conditions don't have signs or make you feel ill until the disease has already caused damage to your body.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask your medical provider or pharmacist why it's important to take the medication.</li> <li>• Medications can prevent serious health problems from happening later.</li> </ul>

**If you have questions about your medication, talk with your doctor or pharmacist. He or she will help you find solutions to your medication problems. You can also find more information at [ExcellusBCBS.com/TakeAsDirected](https://www.excellusbcbs.com/takeasdirected)**



Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/drug-use-therapeutic.htm>,  
<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/has/2019/039-508.pdf>

American Heart Association and American Stroke Association - [http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/More/Consumer-HealthCare/Medication-Adherence-Taking-Your-Meds-as-Directed\\_UCM\\_453329\\_Article.jsp](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/More/Consumer-HealthCare/Medication-Adherence-Taking-Your-Meds-as-Directed_UCM_453329_Article.jsp)

Food and Drug Administration - <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/special-features/why-you-need-to-take-your-medications-prescribed-or-instructed>

World Health Org - [http://www.who.int/chp/knowledgepublications/adherence%20\\_full\\_report.pdf](http://www.who.int/chp/knowledgepublications/adherence%20_full_report.pdf)

Copyright © 2023, Excellus BlueCross BlueShield, a nonprofit independent licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association. All rights reserved.

Our Health Plan complies with federal civil rights laws. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, origin, age, disability, or sex.

Atención: Si habla español, contamos con ayuda gratuita de idiomas disponible para usted. Consulte el documento adjunto para ver las formas en que puede comunicarse con nosotros.

注意：如果您说中文，我们可为您提供免费的语言协助。请参见随附的文件以获取我们的联系方式。