



## Get the Facts: You can't afford to skip your medicine

Your doctor or nurse practitioner has prescribed medicine for you to help you become healthier and stay healthier. However, this won't happen if you don't take it! It is important that you take your medicines exactly as prescribed, for as long as it is prescribed, even if you're feeling fine.

There are a number of things that can happen if you don't take your medicine as prescribed.

- The disease you are taking the medicine for may not improve in fact it may worsen.
- Your healthcare provider, who may be unaware that you are not taking your medicine, may prescribe an increased amount of the same medicine or may prescribe a new medicine because they feel that the original medicine has not been working the way it should be. This can be dangerous because it may result in too much medicine being prescribed and possibly at doses that are too high.
- Another very important reason to take your medicine is to save money. Every time you fill a prescription and then decide not to take it you have thrown money away. You can also save money by taking your medicine correctly because you might be healthier and might not need to visit the doctor as often. Most importantly, you might avoid hospitalization because your disease stays in control.
- The medicine that you buy and then do not take can build up in your cabinets and refrigerator and then may be used wrongly by friends and family or accidentally taken by children.

There is a list of important questions to ask on the back of this paper, suggestions on how to remember to take your medications, a few important facts, and a list of resources.

## Questions to ask your health care provider or pharmacist:

- What is the name of the medicine?
- When and how do I take it?
- For how long should I take it?
- Do I need to take the medicine on an empty or full stomach?
- Should I avoid alcohol?
- Are there any side effects?
- What should I do if I forget a dose?
- Are there any foods or medicines I should avoid?
- Is there a generic form available?
- How should it be stored?
- What should I do if I am having trouble paying for my medicine?

Keep a list of all your medicines including the above information in your wallet, on your refrigerator, and give a copy to someone close to you for safekeeping. You may also ask your pharmacist if they have a list already prepared for you!

## Tips to help you remember to take your medication:

- Use a medicine diary.
- Establish a routine.

- Use reminders/notes
- Use a medicine organizer
- Use a timer
- Plan ahead

## Fast Facts:

- If you don't take your medicine for high blood pressure, you increase your risk for stroke, heart failure, kidney failure, and vision loss.
- Taking your diabetes medicine not only helps you feel better, it also protects you from long-term complications such as vision problems, kidney disease, surgical loss of foot or leg, nerve damage, and stroke.
- If you are prescribed antibiotics, it is very important that you finish all of the medicine prescribed even if you are feeling fine. If you stop antibiotics before you are finished, bacteria may become tolerant to the antibiotics currently available and we may be unable to treat the infection in the future.

**Remember to always consult with your physician if you have any questions about your medication.**