

The Importance of Medication Adherence

Patient adherence with antidepressant therapy is a critical aspect of effective clinical management. According to data, over the past 10 years, approximately 50 percent of psychiatric patients prematurely discontinue antidepressant therapy and are non-adherent when assessed at six months after the initiation of treatment.

Factors impacting adherence can be complex, and include:

- Medication-related side effects;
- Forgetting to take medication;
- Emotional concerns of consumers;
- Convenient access to medications;
- Perceived benefit, or lack of efficacy, of the medication;
- A lack of understanding by the consumer/supports on how to take the medication;
- Inconsistent follow-up care;
- Low health literacy;
- Cultural and/or religious beliefs;
- Lack of knowledge on the importance of medication adherence; and
- Inability to pay for medication



An individual's circumstances may include one or more of these factors. Whatever the reason, non-adherence can lead to missed opportunities to improve your quality of life. Your doctor or pharmacist can help you understand the importance of taking your medication, as well as the benefits and side effects. It is important that you talk with your doctor regarding any concerns you have about your medication(s).

If additional resources for extra support to help you keep on track with your medications are needed, consider these:

- Use a pill box or medication cassette
- Take advantage of technology such as text message reminders, timers, dispensers and apps
- Ask your prescriber for detailed written instructions
- Combine with a daily task, such as meals or brushing your teeth
- Set an alarm
- Keep it visible
- Enlist a loved one's help

It is important that your doctor carefully explore your concerns about these medications and closely monitor you