

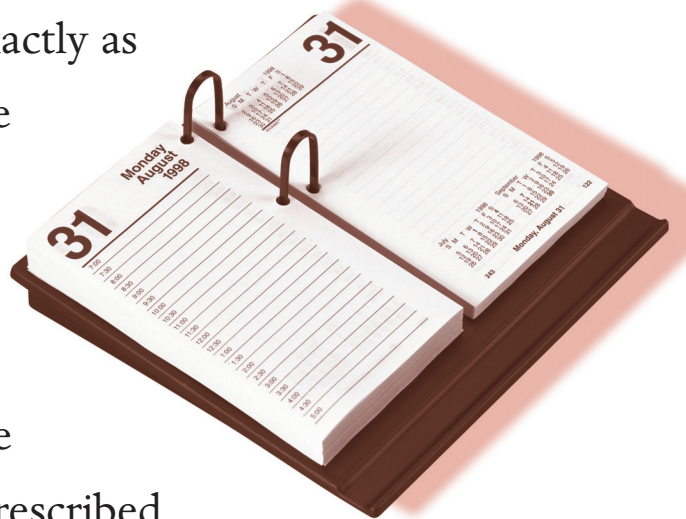
Taking Medicine for Hypertension Every Day

Why It's Important, Tips for Remembering

How many times have you “forgotten” to brush your teeth or wash your face? Most of us rarely skip these daily habits because they are part of our routine. In the same way, taking medicine as prescribed to treat hypertension should become part of your daily routine. For your health, now and in the future, it's very important that you take all your medicines correctly.

Unfortunately, not taking medication exactly as prescribed is very common—and can be dangerous to your health. Consider these statistics from the American Heart Association.

- Two thirds of all Americans don't take medications exactly as their doctors prescribed
- Ten percent of all hospital admissions are due to people not taking prescription medications correctly



“Take as Directed”— Take It Seriously

Why is it so important to take your medication just as your doctor prescribes? The answer is, “your health.” If not taken as directed, your medication may not work. You could experience problems that could be dangerous to your health or cause your disease to worsen.

Are you following your doctor’s recommendations closely, including directions for taking your medicine for hypertension? If so, you’re doing a great job of what health care professionals call “adherence” or “compliance.” That just means you’re taking the professional’s advice, whether it’s about eating right and getting more exercise, quitting smoking, or taking medications. If your adherence isn’t so great, you have lots of company. Answer these quick questions truthfully to quiz your own adherence.

Are You Serious About Taking Your Medication?

1. Do you ever forget to take your medication?
2. Have you ever run out of pills because you didn’t refill your prescription?
3. Does your medicine cabinet hold old prescription bottles that still have pills inside?
4. Do you ever stop taking a medication because you feel better?
5. Are you unsure about what medicines you’re taking and why you’re taking them?
6. Are you uncertain of what side effects you might expect from your prescribed medicine—and what to do if they occur?

A “yes” answer to any of these questions means that you need some help to have better adherence to your medicine.

Need Help Remembering Your Medication? Try These Tips...

Since it's so important to take your medication for hypertension properly, take advantage of these tips to help you remember...and help you help yourself.

- Be consistent—Take your medicine at the same time every day
- Try teamwork—Take your medicine along with a daily meal, or team it with other daily activities such as brushing your teeth
- Think “in the box”—Put pills in a divided pillbox marked for the days of the week (your local drugstore probably carries them)
- Speak up—Ask people close to you to help you remember to take your medication
- Check yourself—Keep a small calendar near your medicine. Each time you take your dosage, make a check mark
- Go the “write” way—Write yourself a reminder note, and attach it to your medicine cabinet or refrigerator

Your Own Good Health A Lifelong Commitment

Medicines are an important part of your hypertension treatment, so be sure to take them just as your doctor prescribes. Your medicines can help prevent a heart attack, stroke, and heart failure (a serious condition that keeps your body from getting all the blood it needs).

Your medicines can't help you if you don't take them properly. For your own health, you must take all your medicines exactly as your doctor prescribes. If you have any questions or have problems taking your medicines, be sure to ask your doctor or pharmacist for help.



Remember

If you need medicines to help lower your blood pressure, you still need to make the lifestyle changes your doctor recommends. This may include weight control; exercise; healthy eating; a low-sodium diet; stopping smoking; and limited alcohol intake. It's important to take your medicine for hypertension *exactly* as your doctor prescribes.