

## Have You Had Your Pills Today?

If you are like most people with diabetes, you probably take several pills each day. In fact, the average person with diabetes takes nine different medicines. It can be easy to forget to take some of your pills, especially if you take them at various times throughout the day.

Because many of the pills are to keep your blood glucose, blood pressure, and cholesterol on target to prevent future complications, you may not feel any different whether you take them or not. But your pills are meant to keep you healthy in the long term, even if you are feeling well now. The medicines help to keep your numbers right on target now and avoid serious health problems later.

### Tips for Remembering Your Medicines

Listed below are some ideas you can use to help you remember to take your medicines. As you read them, think about when you have missed your medicines and if any of these might help you.

- Mark a calendar or list each time you take your medicine.

- Use a special pillbox with sections for each day of the week. Some even have different sections for different times of each day.
- Take your pills at the same time of day that you do other routine tasks. Put your pills on the table or by your toothpaste. Take them when you eat, brush your teeth, or turn out the lights at bedtime.
- Ask your pharmacist to put your medicine in a special “bubble pack” with the pills for each day in separate compartments so you can easily see if you have already taken each day’s pills.

### Choosing to Skip Your Medicines

Sometimes people just decide not to take their medicines for a variety of reasons. Some people cannot afford the cost of their medicines and take them less often than prescribed or not at all. Others decide not to take their medicines because they are worried that their blood glucose or blood pressure may fall too low. Or, they may be having side effects

or just be tired of the hassle of taking so many pills every day.

Although some of these may sound like good reasons, deciding not to take your medicine may not be in the best interests of your long-term health. Listed below are some other options for dealing with these issues.

- If cost is an issue, talk with your provider about getting samples or other medicines that are less costly. Ask about any discount or prescription plans for which you may qualify. When you get your prescriptions filled, ask your pharmacist if there is a generic version of the medicine. Shop around; prices can vary a great deal from one pharmacy to the next.
- If you are worried that your blood glucose will go too low, ask your provider or pharmacist if this could happen with your particular medicine. Also, ask if there is a blood glucose or blood pressure reading that is so low that you need to skip your medicine. Remember, your medicines are working to lower your readings, so even when you are right on target, you still need

the medicines to keep your readings where you want them.

- If you are having side effects, call your doctor's office to discuss how you are feeling. There may be another option or a lower dose that will work without causing side effects. Although it may seem easier to just stop the medicine,

some medicines are harmful if stopped abruptly.

- If you are tired of the hassle, think about why. Perhaps you are having a hard time coming to terms with your diabetes. You may feel angry, sad, or distressed about all the work that caring for diabetes involves, including taking so many medicines. These are

common feelings that can get in the way of caring for yourself. Although it is hard to change your feelings, you can change some of your thoughts about taking medicines. For example, instead of thinking of them as a hassle, try telling yourself that your pills are helping you live a longer and healthier life.



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