

Addressing Medication Adherence

Predictors of Poor Adherence

- * Barriers to affording and/or accessing medications
- * Poor understanding of medical condition(s) and/or medications
- * Language or cultural barriers
- * Belief that medications are not beneficial and/or may be harmful
- * Asymptomatic conditions
- * Medication-taking fatigue
- * Lack of trust in the healthcare system



Assessing Adherence

- Ask open-ended questions to assess the patient's knowledge about their medications and how they are actually taking them
- Assess patient beliefs and confidence in taking their meds
- Use patient-friendly language and avoid jargon. Keep terminology as simple as possible
- Avoid judgmental statements or questions. Try not to use the word "why" when asking about medication use
- Help the patient open up about their barriers to taking medications or taking them as prescribed
- Use motivational interviewing and reflective listening techniques
 - Motivational Interviewing: <http://motivationalinterviewing.org>
 - Readiness to Change: www.aafp.org/afp/2000/0301/p1409.html
- Use available adherence assessment tools
 - Merck Adherence Estimator: <http://adherenceestimator.com>

Improving Adherence

■ Review medications at every patient visit

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| ✓ Name of the medication (brand/generic) | • Identify and address barriers to adherence |
| ✓ Specific use or purpose | • Identify and address barriers to access and affordability |
| ✓ How to take the medication | • Consider patient's preferences and goals of therapy |
| ✓ Benefits of taking the medication | • Involve the patient in choosing strategies for improving adherence |
| ✓ Consequences of not taking the medication | |

Encourage patients to bring their medications with them to their appointments: <http://bit.ly/bluebaginfosheet>; www.ahrq.gov/professionals/quality-patient-safety/quality-resources/tools/literacy-toolkit/healthlittoolkit2-tool8.html

- Simplify medication regimen where possible: reduce dosing frequency, align timing of medications, have patient discontinue any unnecessary medications, including OTCs and herbals
- Provide patient a written list of all medications with dosages, instructions, and indications
- Communicate and collaborate with patient's pharmacy to improve overall care, including
 - Helping patient identify resources & strategies for removing barriers to access, such as affordability
 - Helping patient explore available adherence tools (phone apps, pill box(es), calendars)
 - Using adherence support services (adherence/blister packaging, medication synchronization) offered by CPESN (Community Pharmacy Enhanced Services Network) pharmacies: www.cpesn.com

AMA Steps Forward module on Medication Adherence: www.stepsforward.org/modules/medication-adherence
ACPM Medication Adherence Clinical Reference: www.acpm.org/?MedAdherTT_ClinRef