

## Five Tips For Prescription Medication Success

(NAPSA)—For people who are on one or more daily prescription medicines, forgetting to take a pill can happen from time to time. Planning ahead for such schedule-disrupting events as vacations and special events can help you stay on track and minimize any health risks that might result from not “taking as directed.”

### Doctor's Advice

“It’s really important to take your medication exactly as prescribed, even if you don’t feel different after missing a day or two,” explained Dr. Victoria Losinski, director of pharmacy services at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota. “This is especially true for people with chronic conditions such as diabetes, because their risk of ending up in the hospital is 2.5 times greater when not following a doctor’s treatment plan.”

The mantra “you have to take the medicine for it to work” goes beyond diabetes control. People who don’t take their prescribed high blood pressure medication on a regular basis have a 42 percent higher chance of developing chronic heart failure. And people on high cholesterol medications are twice as likely to develop heart disease if their cholesterol is not under control.

### What You Can Do

To help, here are five tried-and-true tips for strengthening your everyday prescription medication habits:

**1. Talk to a pharmacist.** Some drugs have very specific instructions on when to take them, whether to take them on an empty stomach, with certain foods or to avoid in conjunction with certain medications. Your pharmacist can help you understand your medications and map a plan to stay on track. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota members can also call the number on the back of their cards and speak with a nurse guide.

**2. Write it down.** If you’ve got several medications to manage, write down the details to keep them straight. Con-



**When it comes to taking medication, little details can make a big difference.**

sider using a small one-page calendar, such as the kind found in a checkbook or available through a downloadable tracker, to mark off that you have taken your meds each day.

**3. Get organized.** Using a pillbox is a simple low-tech way to make sure you take exactly what you need when you need it. There are also pharmacies, including PillPack, that sort your prescriptions, vitamins and other over-the-counter medicines into dated packets to make taking your meds even easier. You can also ask your pharmacy if it offers a similar program.

**4. Set an alarm.** Use your smartphone to schedule reminders. If you’re looking for an app, try Rxremind, which can be downloaded for iPhone or for Android.

**5. Refill on time.** Accessing your pharmacy’s auto-refill program, requesting a 90-day supply and using a mail-order prescription service are all good ways to help make sure you don’t run out and miss your medication.

### Learn More

For additional facts, tips and resources, visit [Bluecrossmn.com/ManageMyMeds](http://Bluecrossmn.com/ManageMyMeds).