



# HEALTH ANSWERS

## **Skipping Or Stopping Pills Could Be Risky Business**

(NAPSA)—In today's world, a visit to the doctor can be more complicated than a simple checkup. Patients often leave the doctor's office with a laundry list of information, medications and unanswered questions.

It can be confusing to understand how and why to take your medications.

Sometimes people do not take their medicine as directed by their doctor, or fail to keep taking it for as long as they should. This is called "nonadherence"—and it may negatively affect your health.

Studies have shown that not taking medicines as prescribed can result in more hospital visits, failure to recover from disease, or even death. Whereas patients who take their medication as directed could have lower disease-related medical costs.

Today's medicines can help people live longer, healthier lives.

For example, cholesterol-lowering medicines that help control the risk factors for heart disease have made great strides in lowering the risk of heart attack or stroke. You can't always see or feel the symptoms of heart disease. For that reason, it's important to take your medicines as directed by your doctor, even if you may not

### **Tips for Staying on Your Medicine**

- Understand what medicines your doctor has prescribed and why.
- Try to take your medicine at the same time every day.
- Set your watch alarm to go off when it's time to take your medicine.
- Place a reminder card in a visible place.
- Use a medicine box.
- Do not stop taking your medicines without talking to your doctor.
- Take your medicine as prescribed; don't adjust dosing on your own.



feel yourself getting better.

For example, only about half of patients on a cholesterol-lowering drug are still taking it six months later. And after 12 months, only 30 to 40 percent of patients take their medicine at all. Adherence, or taking your medicine as directed, is key.

If you stop taking medication regularly, your cholesterol may go back up to where it was before you started taking medicine.

If you have questions about your medication, talk with your doctor and stay on the medicines your doctor prescribes.

For more information, visit [www.cholesterolkit.com](http://www.cholesterolkit.com)