



Ask Your Pharmacist

Tips For Medication Management

(NAPSA)—When it comes to staying healthy, eating well and exercising may not be enough. Millions of Americans take prescription drugs to manage long-term health problems, but studies show that only about half stay on their medications as prescribed. CVS pharmacist Carrie Sacky answers your questions about proper medication use:

Q. I am not sure of how and when to take a new medication. What should I do?

A. It is important that you ask your doctor or pharmacist for clear directions on how to take any new medications. Why is this medication being prescribed for you? What side effects, if any, might you expect? Always ask your pharmacist about food, drinks or other drugs you should avoid while you're taking this medication.

Q. If I start to feel better but haven't finished a full prescription, can I stop taking it?

A. You should always finish taking your prescription as recommended by your doctor. Your medication cannot work properly if you skip doses, take more or less than the prescribed amount, or stop taking it because you feel better. If you are bothered by side effects, don't stop taking your medication. Talk with your doctor or pharmacist right away about other drug options available or a dosage change that may lower side effects.

Q. If I have multiple prescriptions to be filled but can't afford the cost, what options do I have?

A. If money is a concern, remember that the price you pay for stopping your treatment may be much higher than the price of the medicine itself. If you stop



Carrie Sacky, RPh

your medication and your symptoms return or get worse, you may spend more money on added doctor visits or hospital care. In order to save money, you should make sure you understand your health insurance, Medicare or Medicaid benefits. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if there are any generic options available that may cost less than brand-name medications.

Q. If forgetting to take medications is an issue for seniors, what are some ways to help them remember?

A. There are a number of ways to make taking your medications a part of your daily routine so that it's easier to remember to take them as directed. Try taking your medicines at the same time each day or sorting your medications into a daily pill organizer.

Q. Where can I get more information about managing medications?

A. Your local pharmacy is a great resource. Go to www.cvs.com to find a CVS/pharmacy nearby or call a CVS pharmacist at (888) 607-4287.