

# *Use as Directed: 4 Ways to Comply with Rx Drug Instructions*

**It can be easy to forget to take a prescribed medicine, especially when it's not part of your normal routine.** And it's sometimes tempting to toss the pill bottle when you start to feel better after being sick. If you occasionally fail to take medications as prescribed, you're not alone. Studies show that as many as half of prescriptions written in the U.S. are taken incorrectly.

Many avoidable emergency room visits and hospitalizations happen as a result. What's worse, approximately 125,000 people die in the U.S. each year due to "poor medication adherence."

Whether you take medications regularly for chronic conditions or only occasionally to treat illness or infection, it's important to use your prescriptions as directed. Follow these tips for best results:

**1 Follow the rules**  
Always take your medication as instructed by your doctor or pharmacist. Take the proper dose(s) at the right time(s) of day. Pay attention to directions about whether or not to take your medicine with food, as that may affect its potency and how well you tolerate it. If you're told to take a medication until it's gone (such as with many antibiotics), do so – even if your symptoms disappear in half the time.

**2 Know the red flags**  
Note what your doctor or pharmacist says about potential interactions between your prescribed medicine and certain drugs, supplements, foods, or alcohol. Some medications can actually become dangerous when taken in combination with other substances. It's also possible for a medication to lose its effectiveness when taken with something else.



*(continued)*

### 3 Talk to a professional

Begin a conversation with your doctor about any prescribed medications; then keep the dialogue going. Ask whatever questions you have until you feel well-informed about what you'll be taking. Your pharmacist is also a great information resource. As key members of your health care team, they're responsible for working with you to keep your medication regimen safe and effective.

### 4 Get organized

A ten-day, once-every-morning round of antibiotics is pretty easy to keep track of. But when you have multiple medications that need to be taken at different times over a longer duration, it can get confusing. Don't let complexity stand in the way of your health and safety. Simplify your medication routine with the help of pill boxes. They're inexpensive, available at most pharmacies and specifically designed to hold all the daily pills you need for a week or even a month.



#### Questions?

We have answers! Call us at 1-800-539-4072 or email [askBlue&Gold@healthnet.com](mailto:askBlue&Gold@healthnet.com).

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