

# Tips to Improve Medication Adherence



## Prescribe generic medications

- Multiple studies have shown that cost is an important factor leading to lower adherence.
- A more affordable generic medication that is taken regularly is more effective than a brand name medication that is not!



## Recommend use of mail order

- Many patients can receive up to a 90 day supply when using mail order.
- Patients often save money on copays by using mail order.
- A large study (>290,000 participants) showed that patients using mail order were more likely to be adherent to their chronic medications, even when excluding auto refill programs.



## Establish a default quantity of 90 days for your chronic medications

- The less frequently patients have to pick up a prescription the more likely they are to be adherent.



## Communicate with your patients about their adherence

- Explain your rationale for choosing a specific medication, especially for medications where patients may not notice any benefits like statins or anti-hypertensives.
- Ask open-ended questions about side effects, financial needs, and other barriers to adherence.
- Use motivational interviewing techniques and shared decision making.



## Lower the pill burden and increase the dosing interval, when possible

- An increasing number of once daily and combination therapies are now available as generic medications. For example, Lisinopril/HCTZ is a great choice as a first line anti-hypertensive.



## Utilize support staff to call patients a few days after starting a new medication

- This is a good time to ask the patient about how they are tolerating the new medication and if they are remembering to take it every day.



## Encourage the use of adherence aids

- Medication boxes (Medi-Sets) or other systems have been specifically designed to overcome forgetfulness and improve adherence.
- Smartphone apps may be helpful in increasing adherence.
- A regular alarm on a smartphone can help be a daily reminder to take a medication.