

# Medicines



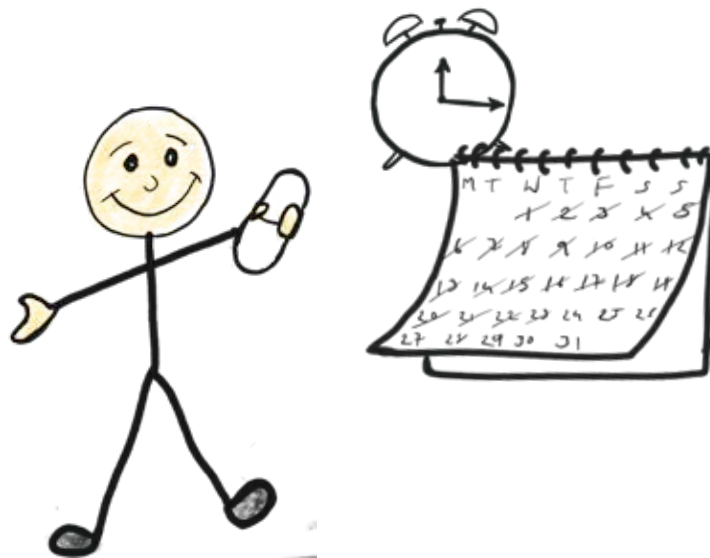
Mental illness is just like any chronic physical illness such as diabetes, blood pressure etc. Just like the treatment of any chronic physical illness, the treatment of mental illness requires long-term medication.

Adherence to medication and regular follow-ups with the treating doctor help in improving symptoms.



# What is Medication Adherence?

- Taking the medication regularly as prescribed by the doctor.
- Taking the correct dose of medication on time and at correct intervals.
- Not skipping doses in between.



# What are the benefits of Medication Adherence?

- Reduction in symptoms.
- Makes him/her feel better.
- Improves his/ her ability to interact with friends and family members.






- Improves his/ her functioning in day-to-day activities.
- Helps him/ her do his/ her job.
- Reduces the risk of recurrence of symptoms.
- Reduces the possibility of future hospitalization.

# What is “Poor Medication Adherence”?

- Not taking the prescribed medication on time and at correct intervals.
- Not taking the correct dose as prescribed by the doctor (such as one tablet or half tablet).



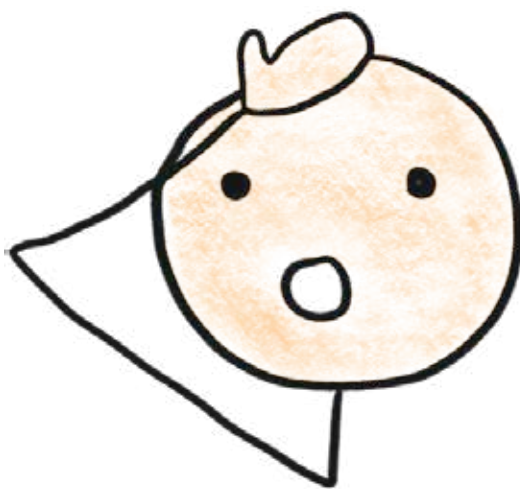
# What are the harms of poor medication adherence?

- No improvement in symptoms.
- Worsening of symptoms with time. 
- Recurrence of symptoms which had improved in the past.
- Inability to do daily activities.
- Disturbance in functioning. 
- Inability to interact with friends & family members properly.
- Argument with family members & friends. 
- Not able to do a job or loss of job.
- Increased risk of hospitalization.

# Why does poor medication adherence occur?

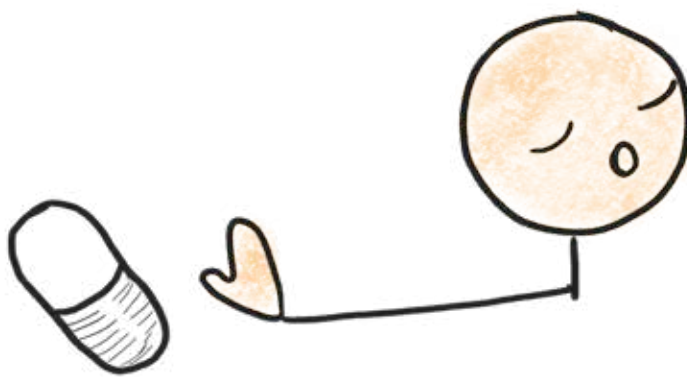
## 1. Intentional decision to miss/stop medication:

- Myths and misconceptions.
- Bothered by side-effects.
- Inability to procure medicines (due to lack of money, lack of information about where to buy them etc).



## 2. Unintentional Interruptions:

- Patient is not fully informed about how to take medication.
- Forgot to take medication.
- Forgot to procure medication on time.
- Forgot to follow-up with the doctor.



# Common Myths & Misconception<sub>s</sub>

## **Myth 1:**

*Medications are addictive or habit-forming and the patient will become dependent on the medicines.*

## **Fact:**

Medications prescribed by the doctor are not habit-forming. However, a correct regimen has to be followed for increasing or decreasing the doses. This can be explained clearly by the treating doctor.





## **Myth 2:**

*Medications are harmful in the long term.*

## **Fact:**

Medications prescribed are safe when taken as per the instructions of the doctor. They will help in the improvement of symptoms. Few side-effects may occur, but they can be tackled. The doctor can suggest alternatives or solutions for dealing with the side-effects like adjusting the doses, changing to a different medication etc.



## **Misconception 1:**

*My medicines are not helping me feel better.*

## **Fact:**

Medicines sometime take longer to act and must be taken regularly for them to be fully effective.

Treatment for schizophrenia is long-term, and continued adherence to medicines helps in improving the symptoms and functional recovery.



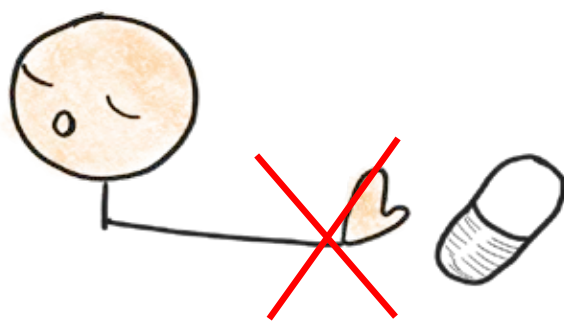
## **Misconception 2:**

*Patient is feeling better, so there is no need to take medicines anymore.*

### **Fact:**

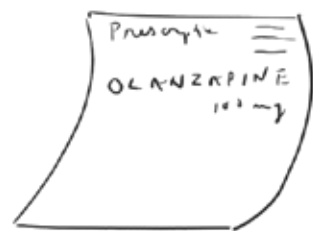
Do not stop the medicines, even if the patient is feeling better.

Discuss with the doctor before making any changes to the medication. Stopping medicines without consulting the doctor can be harmful..



# What are the steps to improve Medication Adherence?

1. Understand the names of the prescribed medicines. If you have any doubts, ask the treating doctor before the consultation ends.



**Tip:** Request the doctor to write the names in CAPITAL LETTERS.

2. Understand clearly from the doctor about the correct dose and time of taking the medication.



**Tip:** Request the doctor for written instructions in simple language, if required.



3. Ask the doctor about the common side-effects from the medication and what to do if they occur.

4. If your family member experiences side-effects, visit the doctor as soon as possible. Don't stop the medication immediately. There are alternatives available for dealing with side-effects.

5. Fix the time for taking medication.

**Tip:** Pair it with routine activities like taking meals.



6. Help your family member use simple devices like alarm clock or mobile phone to set alarms at the time of taking medication.



7. Remind him/ her about taking medication. Make a pill box for keeping the medicines daywise..

8. Ensure that your family member goes for regular follow-ups as advised by the doctor.

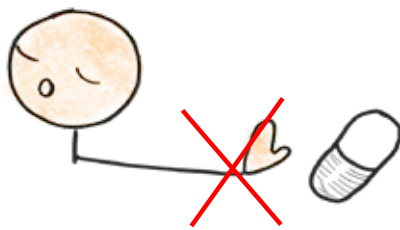
9. Make sure there is adequate stock of medication. Refill before the stock is completely over.



10. In case the doctor increases or decreases the medication dosage, understand the instructions clearly.

11. If you have any doubts or queries about the medication, feel free to ask the doctor regarding the same. Do not stop the medication.

12. If you are unable to procure medicines due to any reason (such as lack of funds, no medicine shops in the vicinity, lack of supply for a particular medicines etc.), make sure to discuss these issues with the treating doctor. It will help the doctor to look for and suggest alternatives.



13. Please ensure that your family member stays away from harmful addictive substances (such as alcohol, tobacco, cannabis).

