

Treatment Adherence

“Adherence to treatment” is how much the person follows the recommended treatment plan.

A person is said to be adherent if he/ she is:

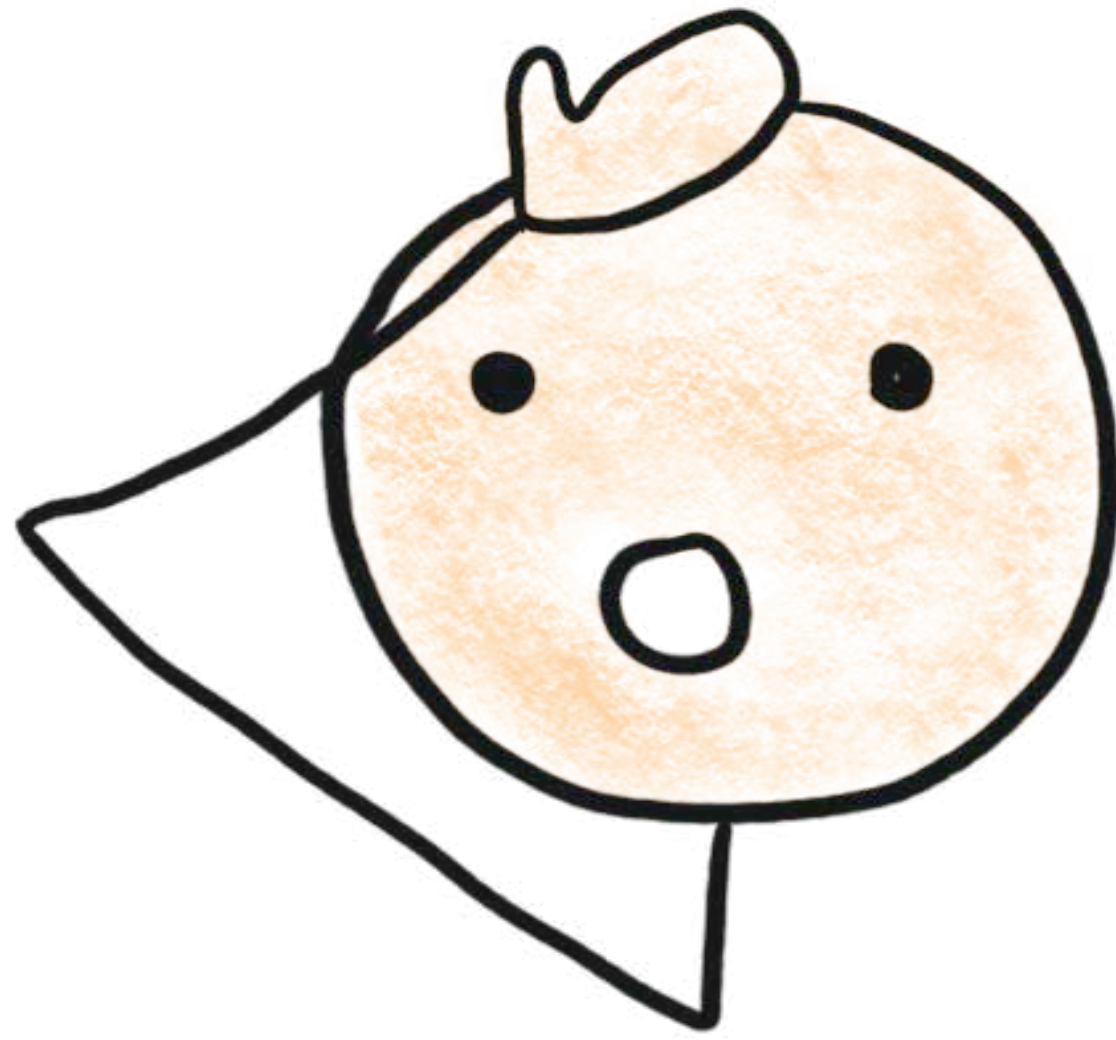
- ▶ taking prescribed medications
- ▶ in prescribed doses
- ▶ at the advised time
- ▶ coming for regular follow-ups
- ▶ performing the tasks given by the therapist



Poor treatment adherence can be due to the following reasons:

Unintentional Interruptions:

- ▶ Person is not fully informed about how to take medication.
- ▶ Difficulty in understanding the instructions regarding dosage and timing of medicines
- ▶ Person may miss their doses as they have attention and memory problems.
- ▶ Person may forget to procure medication on time.

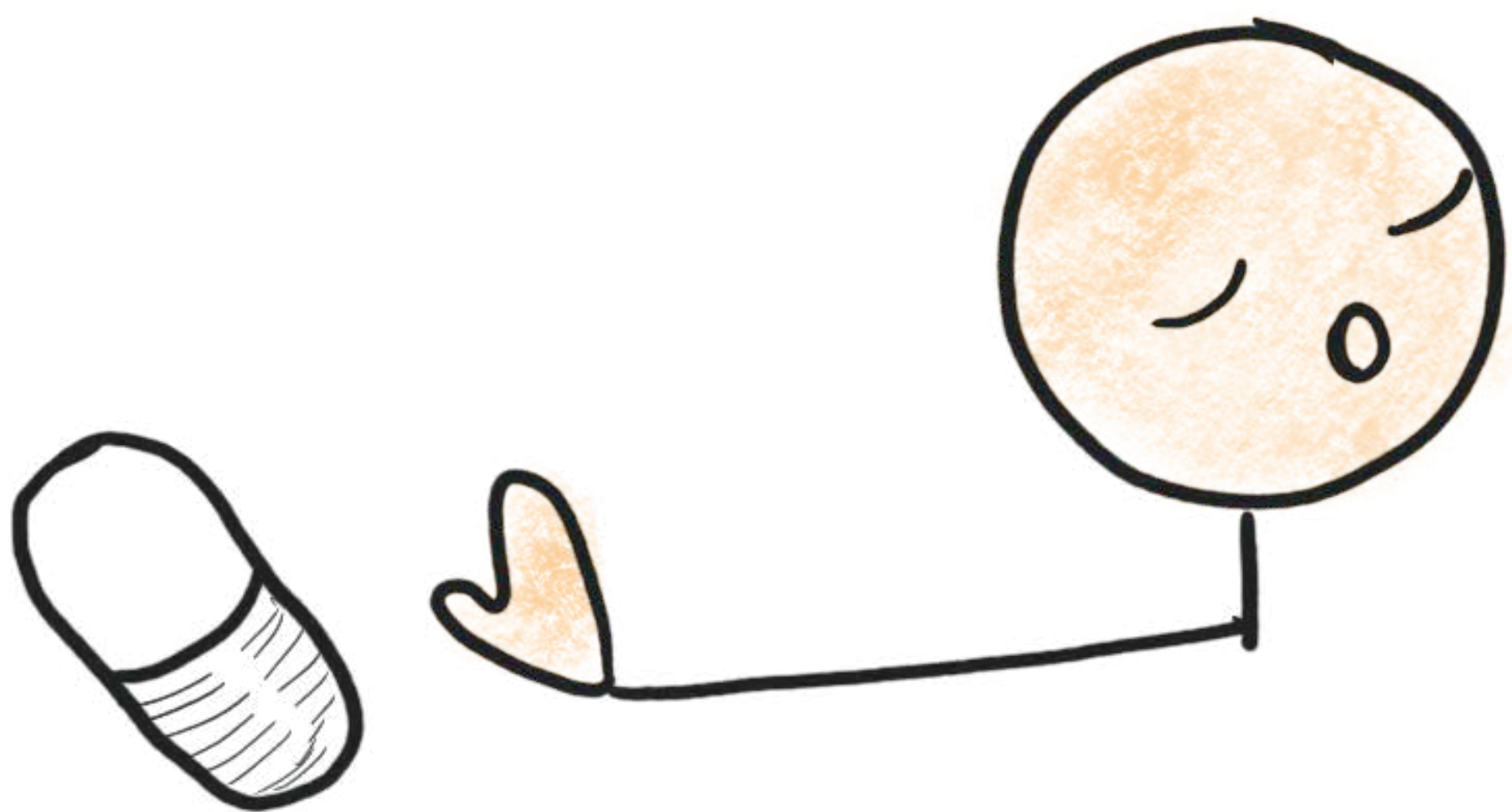


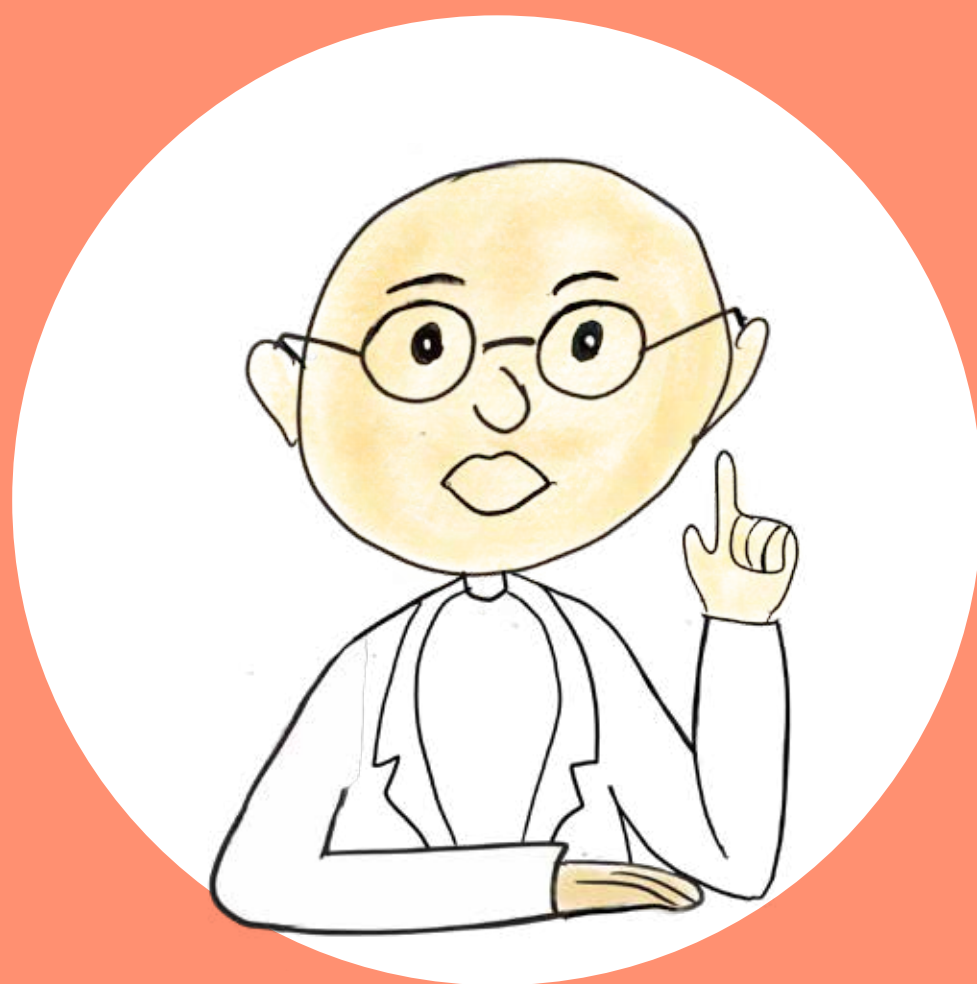
- ▶ They may forget to follow-up with the doctor.
- ▶ Lack of social support and supervision of medications.
- ▶ Due to lack of insight into symptoms, person believes that he or she does not require medications, as they are not ill.

Intentional Decision to Stop Medication:

- ▶ Myths and misconceptions regarding medications, like they are addictive, they are just sleeping pills, they control the mind etc.
- ▶ Multiple medications.
- ▶ Difficult dosing schedule.
- ▶ Side-effects.
- ▶ Belief that medications are no longer required, when one starts to feel better.
- ▶ Inability to procure medicines (due to financial reasons or unavailability).

- ▶ Taking addictive substances like alcohol or cannabis. He/ she may assume that intake of these substances interferes with the effectiveness of treatment, and hence decides to stop the medication or miss doses.
- ▶ Lack of knowledge about the importance of medications.





Interventions to improve treatment adherence should be tailored according to the cause of non-adherence.

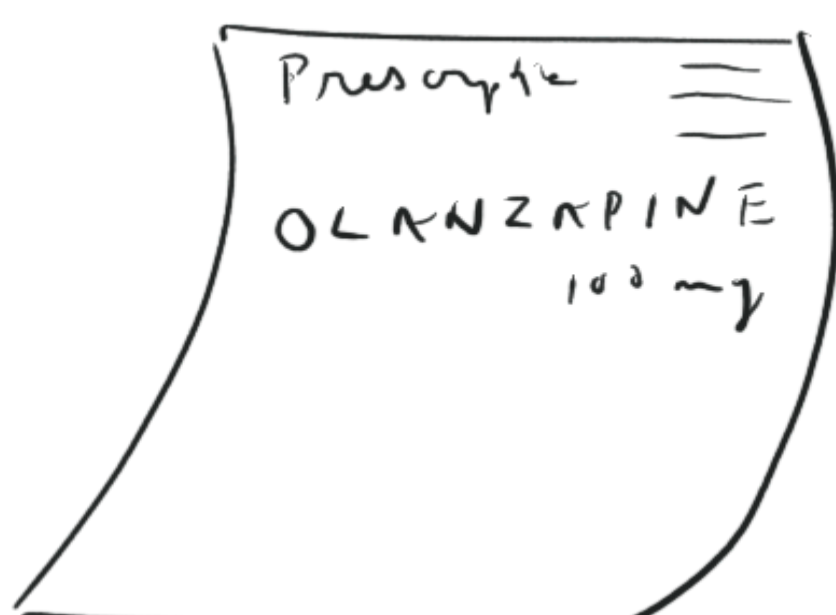
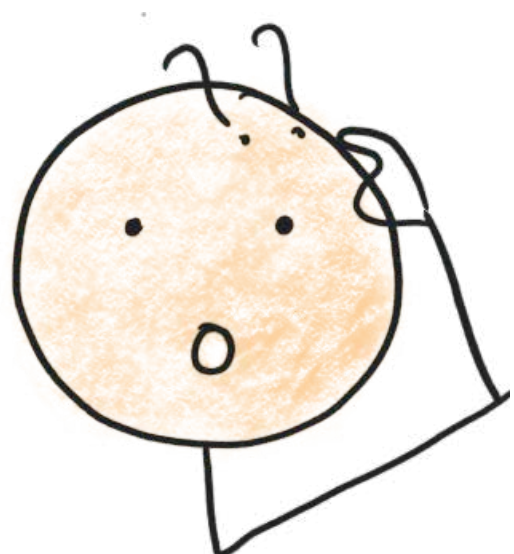
Ways to Improve Medication Adherence

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

[**TIP:** Request the doctor to write the names in CAPITAL LETTERS.]

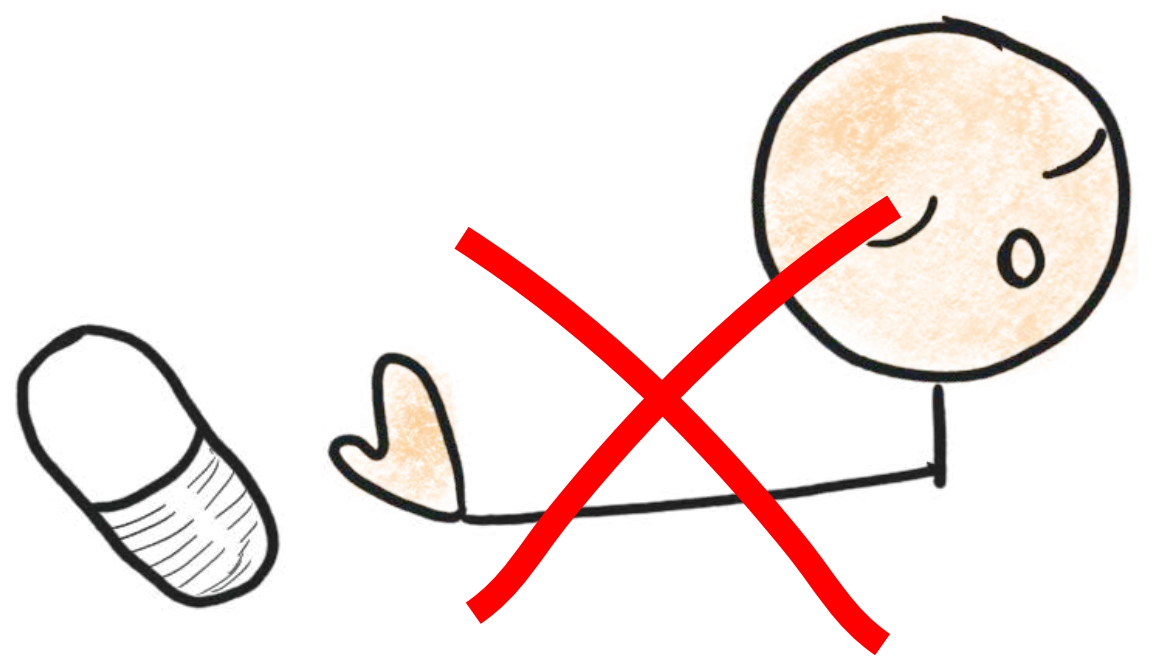
- Understand clearly from the doctor about the correct dose and time for taking medication.

[**TIP:** Request the doctor for written instructions in simple language, if required.]



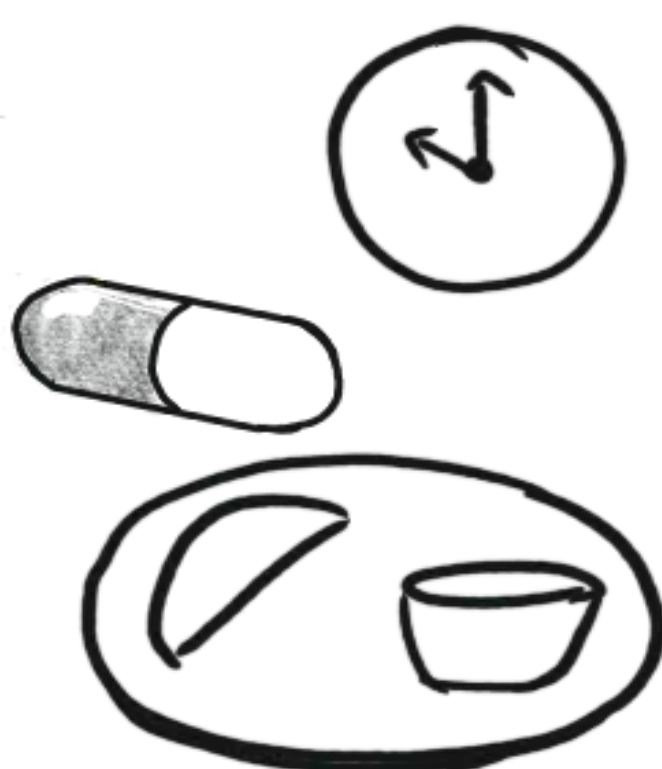
► Ask the doctor about the common side-effects from the medication and what to do if they occur.

► If you are experiencing side-effects, visit the doctor as soon as possible. Don't stop the medication immediately. There are alternatives available for dealing with side-effects.

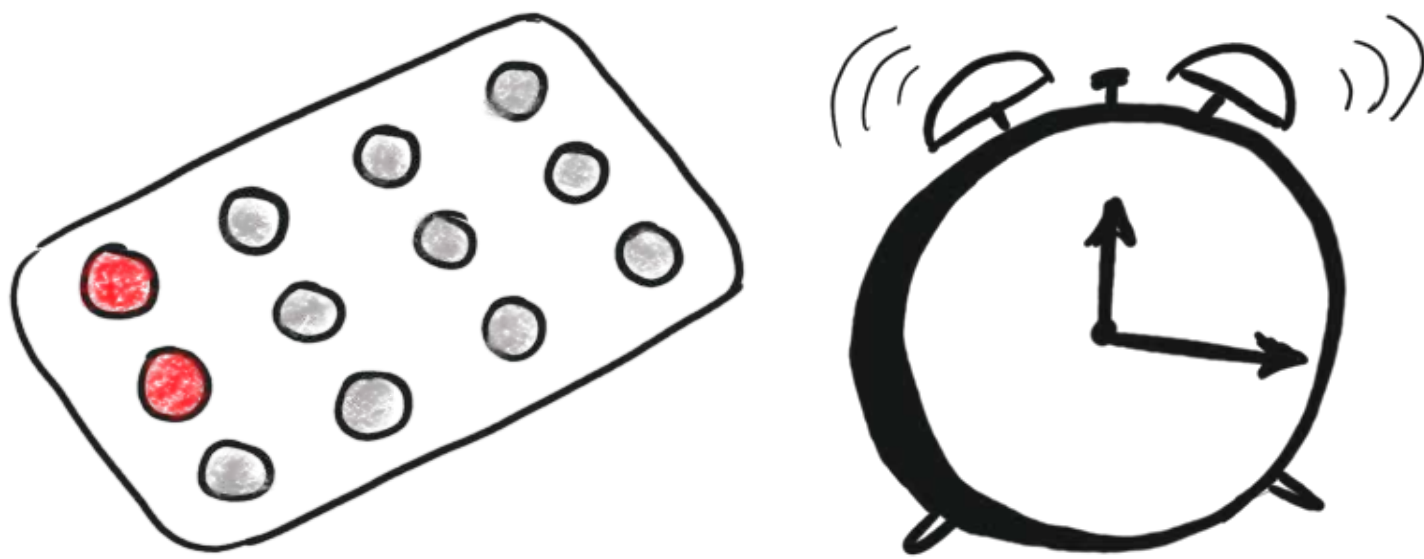


► Fix a time for taking medication.

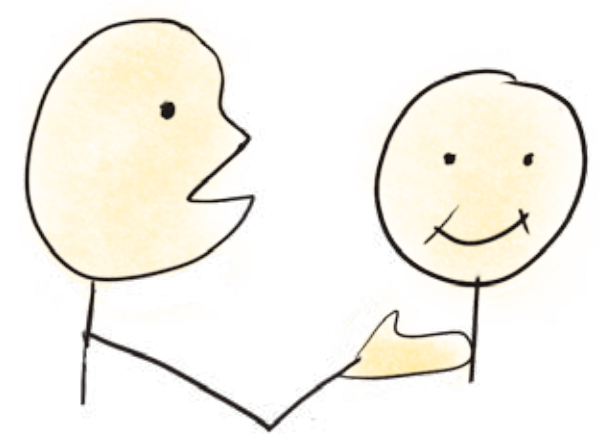
[**TIP:** Pair it with routine activities like meals.]



- ▶ Use simple devices like alarm clock or mobile phone for setting alarm at the time of taking medication.



- ▶ Ask your caregiver to remind you about taking medication.



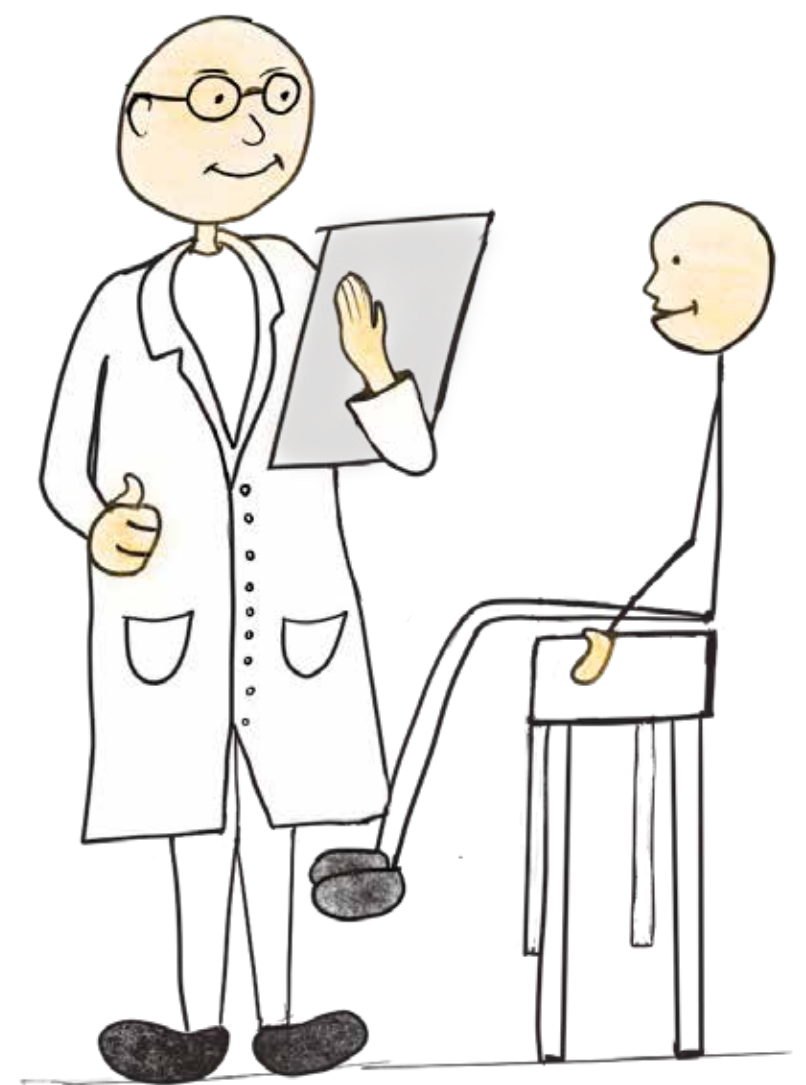
- ▶ Make a pill box for keeping the medicines day wise.

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

- ▶ Ensure that you go for regular follow-ups as advised by the doctor.

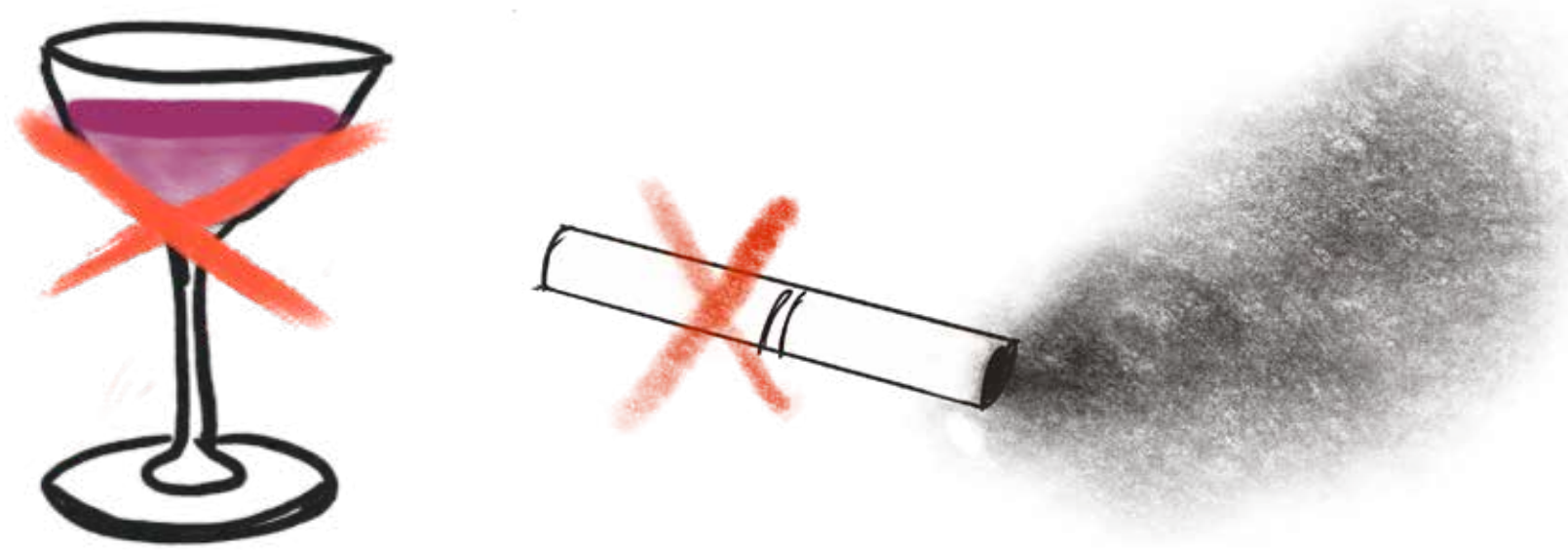
► In case the doctor increases or decreases the doses, understand the instructions clearly.

► In case of any doubts or queries about the medication, ask the doctor regarding the same. Do not stop the medication.



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

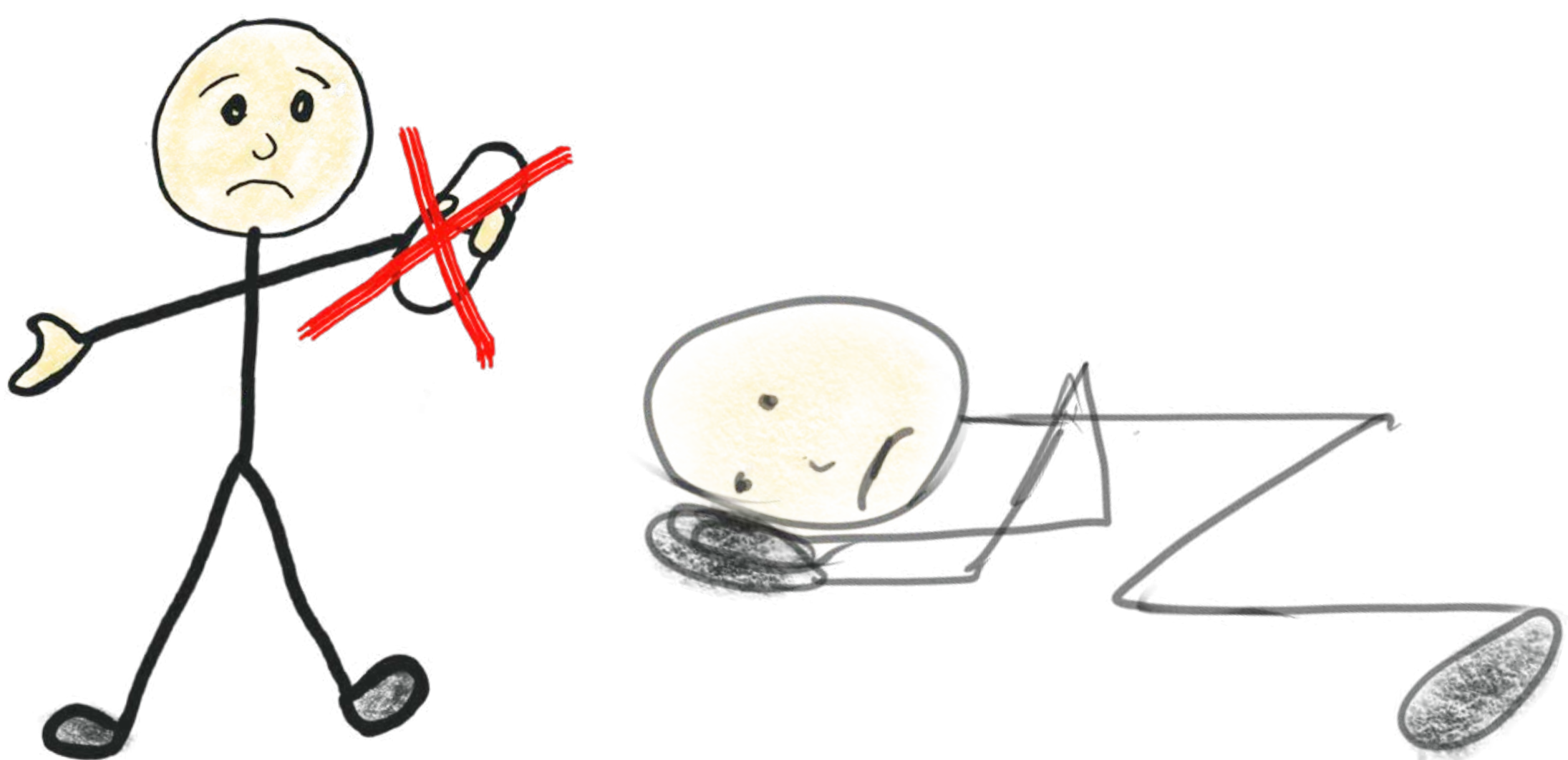
► Please stay away from harmful addictive substances like alcohol, tobacco, cannabis etc.



► If you don't want to have daily tablet, alternatives for the same are available like rapid dissolving tablets or syrups or sprinkles. You can consider taking medication in these forms. Long acting injections are also available.

Preventing Recurrence

- ▶ Anti-psychotic medications should be continued even after symptoms have improved.
- ▶ Duration of treatment is usually at least 1- 2 years.
- ▶ If the medication is stopped early, there is a very high chance that symptoms will return.



- ▶ This may not happen right away. It can take few weeks or months of stopping the medications.
- ▶ You should discuss with your doctor before you decide to discontinue medications.
- ▶ Medications should be gradually tapered and stopped under regular follow-up with your doctor.

Early Warning Signs:

- ▶ Decreased or irregular sleep
- ▶ Getting Irritable or angry for minor reasons
- ▶ Decline in self-care or personal hygiene
- ▶ Becoming isolated or withdrawn socially
- ▶ Drop in grades or job performance
- ▶ Trouble in thinking clearly or concentrating
- ▶ Feeling suspicious or uneasy with others
- ▶ Unusual, overly intense new ideas

- ▶ Strange feelings or having no feelings at all
- ▶ Confused speech or trouble in communicating