

## Tips For Taking Your Medication And Staying Healthy

(NAPSM)—Have you ever skipped a dose of a prescription drug or taken less than prescribed? Have you ever started taking a prescribed medicine and then stopped? Or have there been times when you did not even pick up the first prescription of a new medicine prescribed by your doctor from the pharmacy? Did you know that not taking medicines as prescribed by your doctor for chronic conditions, such as high blood pressure or diabetes, can make you sicker and even result in a hospital stay or emergency room visit that could have been avoided? This is called “medication nonadherence,” an issue that not only impacts your health, but also results in estimated costs to the U.S. health care system of approximately \$300 billion each year.

Some of the most common reasons for not taking medicines regularly include cost and side effects, but a recent study found there are also more subtle reasons, which people may not even realize are influencing their behavior. The study, sponsored by CVS Caremark and conducted by Minds at Work, a consulting company based in Cambridge, Mass., looked at people who said they would like to be taking their medicine as prescribed but weren't completely sure why they were not. The study revealed that, of those individuals who participated in the survey:

- Twenty-four percent believed that taking prescribed medicines interfered with personal priorities, such as taking care of family members or their social life.

- Twenty-one percent said that taking medicine made them feel as if they were losing control of their lives and by stopping their medicine they were “resisting authority.”

- Seventeen percent believed



**Taking your medicine regularly is not always easy—but the benefits are just what the doctor ordered.**

that taking medicine made them feel old or gave them another identity (i.e., as a patient) that they didn't like.

Recognizing the reasons why you are not taking a prescribed medicine can be the first step toward addressing the problem, getting back on track and staying healthy. Here are some other tips for keeping up with your prescriptions:

- If cost is a concern, consider switching from a brand-name medicine to a generic. Generic medicines offer a safe and effective option at a fraction of the cost. In fact, hundreds of popular brand-name drugs are now available as generics, which can help you save 30–80 percent on prescription drug costs.

- Talk to your health care professional. If medication side effects are bothering you, talk with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist—you might be able to switch to a different medicine or adjust the timing of your dose to lessen the problem.