

## When you feel like changing your medicine

### Definition

You may find a time when you want to stop or change your medicine. But changing or stopping your medicine on your own can be dangerous. It could make your condition worse.

Learn how to talk to your health care provider and pharmacist about your medicine. You can make decisions together so you feel well with your medicines.

### Common Reasons for Changing Medicine

You may think about stopping or changing your medicine when you:

- Feel better
- Think it is not working
- Are having side effects and feel bad
- Are worried about the costs

### Do not Stop Taking Your Medicine When You Feel Better

You often feel better quickly from taking some medicine. You may feel like you do not need to take it anymore.

If you stop taking your medicine before you are supposed to, you will not get its full effect, or your condition can get worse. Here are some examples:

- When you take antibiotics, you will feel better in 1 to 2 days. If you stop taking the medicine early, you may get sick again.
- If you are taking a steroid pack for your asthma, you will feel better quickly. You may think you can stop taking it because you feel so good. Suddenly stopping a steroid pack can make you feel very sick.

### Do not Stop Taking Your Medicine if You Think it Isn't Working

If you do not feel better, you may think your medicine is not working. Talk to your provider before you make any changes. Find out:

- What to expect from the medicine. Some medicines may take more time to make a difference.
- If you are taking the medicine correctly.
- If there is another medicine that may work better.

### If Your Medicine Makes You Feel Sick, Talk to Your Doctor

Some medicines may make you feel sick. You may have a sick stomach, itchy skin, dry throat, or something else that does not feel right.

stopping any medicine. The provider may:

- Change your dose so you do not feel sick from it.
- Change your medicine to a different kind.
- Give you suggestions on how to feel better when taking the medicine.

## Talk to Your Doctor if You Can't Afford Your Medicine

Medicines can cost a lot of money. If you are worried about money, you may want to cut costs.

Do not cut pills in half unless your provider tells you to. Do not take fewer doses than prescribed or take your medicine only when you feel bad. Doing so can make your condition worse.

Talk to your provider if you do not have enough money for your medicine. Your provider may be able to change your medicine to a generic brand that costs less. Many pharmacies and drug companies have programs for reducing the cost for people.

## When to Call the Doctor

Call the provider when you feel like changing your medicine. Know all the medicines that you take. Tell your provider about your prescription medicines, over-the-counter drugs, and any vitamins, supplements, or herbs. Together with your provider, decide what medicines you will take.

## Alternative Names

Medication - non-compliance; Medication - nonadherence

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Review Date: August 13, 2020.

Reviewed By: Linda J. Vorvick, MD, Clinical Associate Professor, Department of Family Medicine, UW Medicine, School of Medicine, University of Washington, Seattle, WA. Also reviewed by David Zieve, MD, MHA, Medical Director, Brenda Conaway, Editorial Director, and the A.D.A.M. Editorial team.



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Expires 06/01/2022

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