

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF BREAST CANCER TREATMENTS: Why It's Important to Take Your Medicine

Taking your medicine can be challenging:

- ⊗ Treatments can be complex and hard to understand
- ⊗ Taking medicine for a long time changes your daily routine
- ⊗ Side effects may be hard to manage
- ⊗ Medicines can be expensive
- ⊗ Busy health care professionals may not be able to answer all of your questions when you need them answered
- ⊗ Friends and family may not always understand what you are feeling

You are not alone:

If you find yourself skipping doses or straying from your prescribed regimen, you are not alone. According to a recent Harris Poll, one in three US adults who were prescribed medicines to take regularly report they often did not take them as directed. Their reasons are numerous. Sometimes they just forget. Sometimes they don't want to be reminded of their illness. Sometimes they feel good and don't think they need them.

The risk:

Whatever the reason, when it comes to hormonal therapies for breast cancer, the benefits of taking your medicine are real. Studies have shown patients may reduce their chance of breast cancer recurring:

- ⊗ **12 percent by taking their hormonal therapy for one year**
- ⊗ **29 percent by taking their hormonal therapy for two years**
- ⊗ **47 percent by taking their hormonal therapy for up to five years¹**

¹ EBCTCG *Lancet* 1998 p 1451, 1454, 1458; Howell *Lancet* 2005 p 60, 61, 62

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO STAY ON TRACK: SETTING A PATH TO GOOD HEALTH

- ⌘ ***Become your own best ally***—Set the goal of understanding YOUR treatment plan. Bring a list of questions to your follow-up visits with your doctor; bring a friend or family member to appointments; work to understand your diagnosis and pathology report; and ensure that medical information is explained in a language you can understand.
- ⌘ ***Help your health care team to help you***—Be sure to keep your doctor informed of changes in your medical condition, how you are doing on your treatment, and any other therapies you are considering.
- ⌘ ***Don't overlook your local pharmacist***—Pharmacists may be able to provide refill reminders, information on coping with side effects, and guidance to patient assistance programs if finances are a challenge.

TIPS TO STAY ON TRACK

- ⌘ Take your medicine at the same time every day.
- ⌘ Put a reminder to take your medicine wherever you keep it. If you take your medicine in the kitchen, put a reminder on your kitchen calendar. If you keep it in your bathroom, put a reminder on your bathroom mirror.
- ⌘ Use a pill sorter and fill it with your week's supply of medicine, then keep it in a place where you can see it every day.
- ⌘ Ask a close friend or family member to remind you.
- ⌘ Put reminders on your calendar or datebook to refill your prescription several days before it runs out.
- ⌘ Make a date with your pharmacists to refill your prescription.

Our Goal — Compliance Strategic Initiative (CSI) — CSI is a group of national patient advocacy and support organizations, professional healthcare associations and oncology professionals working together to:

- Raise awareness about the importance of hormonal breast cancer therapies in reducing the risk of breast cancer recurrence
- Better understand therapy non-compliance, and
- Provide education and resources to address the non-compliance issue and improve survivorship

COMPLIANCE STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

Led by: American Cancer Society, CancerCare,

National Surgical Adjuvant Breast and Bowel Project (NSABP), Y-ME National Breast Cancer Organization