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Medication Adherence – America’s Other Drug Problem

35th Talk About Your Medicines Month Addresses Medication Nonadherence

Gloucester, MA – Obscured by the opioid abuse crisis, America is experiencing another, more subtle, drug crisis – people not taking their medications as prescribed. This crisis, called “medication nonadherence,” is costing our country \$100-300 billion dollars and leading to 125,000 deaths annually. Yet medication nonadherence is a problem most people don’t think about.

“In 2019, the Mayo clinic found that nearly a third of American adults didn’t take their medications as prescribed,” said Rich Sagall, MD, the president of NeedyMeds. “Cost was the number one reason,” he continued, “although other issues such as the patient’s lack of understanding why, how, and when to take medicine are also factors. Poverty, poor housing conditions, food insecurity and poor health-literacy are also significant contributing factors.”

To help combat this crisis, [BeMedWise](https://www.bemedwise.org), a project of NeedyMeds, made medication adherence 2020’s Talk About Your Medicines Month theme. Held every October, this annual event in its 35th year, has its own dedicated website: [TalkAboutYourMedicines.org](https://www.talkaboutyourmedicines.org). The site offers a wealth of free information including an in-depth overview of the issue, reference reports, comprehensive educational resource library, a social media campaign toolkit and downloadable handouts and tip sheets for simple steps patients and healthcare professionals can take to improve adherence to the medicines prescribed.

“Our goal is to raise awareness of medication issues and empower consumers to be more informed about and active in decisions affecting their use of medicines,” said Deborah Davidson, the project director for BeMedWise and Talk About Your Medicines Month. “It’s everyone’s responsibility to take steps to improve medication adherence – patients, caregivers, prescribers, and pharmacists.

“With 70% of Americans taking at least one prescription medicine, 50% taking two, and up to 20% taking five or more medications every day,” Davidson commented. “Medication adherence can be a major hurdle and we need everyone’s participation to make it a priority.”

Davidson further explained, “Medication synchronization can help solve problems resulting from complex daily medication schedules and different refill dates. Pharmacists can help patients understand when to take their medicines, possibly lessening the frequency a person takes pills during the day and coordinates the refill dates so the patient can pick up their refills less often. The pharmacist will also review the medicines for possible adverse drug reactions including over-the-counter and dietary supplements.”

“We are excited to kick off the 35th annual Talk About Your Medicines Month with a [free webinar](#) on October 1st at 1:00pm,” said Carla Dellaporta, NeedyMeds’ Director of Education & Partnerships. “It’s a great opportunity to get educated on the barriers to medication nonadherence and tips and tools for addressing the problem.”

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About Talk About Your Medicines Month, BeMedWise and NeedyMeds:

Talk About Your Medicines Month and [BeMedWise](#) are projects of NeedyMeds. Both projects are designed to help people better understand and appropriately use their medicines and how to safely store, and properly dispose of unwanted medicines.

[NeedyMeds](#), a national nonprofit, is a comprehensive and reliable source of information on assistance programs available for people having difficulties paying for their medications or healthcare. There is information on over 30,000 programs. The website is visited by approximately 11,000-14,000 people each workday. NeedyMeds’ information is always free, easy to access, and updated regularly. Unlike similar sites, NeedyMeds requires no registration and gathers no identifiable information on site visitors.

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