

Following your treatment plan

Treatment adherence is defined as the extent to which a patient follows an agreed-upon treatment plan recommended by their practitioner. There are a number of reasons why you may or may not be able to follow a treatment plan. For example, perhaps the practitioner's recommendations were not clear, the supplements included were too expensive or unavailable, or you simply couldn't find the time to exercise more. In any case, trying to stay adherent and follow a recommended treatment plan can help you meet your health goals and reach desired health outcomes.

15 to 30%

Average rate of people do not adhere to a new treatment plan

40 to 60%

of people with chronic conditions follow their treatment plan

Treatment adherence barriers

If you struggle to adhere to follow your prescribed treatment plan, you're not alone. It's common for treatment adherence rates to decline over time. Many other factors influence treatment adherence, including the barriers outlined below.

- Cost and feasibility of treatment plan
- Feeling overwhelmed
- High number of pills or frequency of doses
- Lack of knowledge or practitioner-provided education
- Low frequency of clinical visits and follow-ups
- Fear of side effects
- Readiness to change
- Supplement or medication characteristics (e.g., size, taste, smell)





9 tips for improving treatment adherence

To help you stay on track with your treatment plan, your practitioner may encourage regular follow-up appointments so that they can monitor your progress, provide continuing education, and make any necessary adjustments to your treatment plan. Outlined below are some additional resources and strategies that can help promote treatment adherence.

- 1. Follow instructions provided by your practitioner.** Your practitioner will provide detailed instructions outlining your treatment plan. These instructions may include important information regarding dosing, frequency, timing, and other important considerations.
- 2. Voice your preferences.** When your practitioner is creating a treatment plan for you, make sure to voice your views, preferences, and any questions or concerns you may have. Playing an active role in the development of your treatment plan can improve the likelihood that you'll stick to your plan.
- 3. Link treatment with your simple daily habits.** If you have a hard time remembering to take your supplements or medications, try linking them with another task in your routine, such as brushing your teeth or getting dressed for the day.
- 4. Sign up for refill reminders for supplements and prescriptions.** Many pharmacies offer refill reminders or automatic refills for prescriptions. Online dispensaries for dietary supplements may also provide refill reminders and the option to sign up for autoship orders, so you never miss a dose.
- 5. Schedule telehealth appointments with your practitioner.** Visit with your practitioner from the comfort of your own home using virtual telehealth appointments. Telehealth appointments can save you time and offer a convenient alternative to in-person follow-up appointments. Regularly checking in with your practitioner can help keep you accountable.
- 6. Understand and maximize your insurance coverage.** Save money by understanding what your health insurance plan does and does not cover. Depending on your plan, you may be able to use a health savings account or other insurance spending account to cover the cost of certain treatments, including supplements.
- 7. Use available communication tools to keep in touch with your practitioner between appointments.** Many practices utilize patient portals and other online communication tools. If you have questions regarding your treatment plan or notice side effects or changes in your condition, do not hesitate to contact your practitioner for guidance.
- 8. Ask your practitioner about pre assembled dosing.** Some supplements and medications are available in blister packs, making them easier and more convenient to use. Alternatively, consider sorting your supplements and medications into a pill organizer each week.
- 9. Utilize electronic reminders.** Stick to your treatment plan by setting calendar reminders or asking a friend or loved one to send you text reminders.

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