

Taking Medications Correctly

Heart failure medications can do their job only if they are taken properly. Skipping doses, not refilling a prescription, taking more or less than the prescribed dose or not following a doctor's instructions make it more likely that heart failure will get worse and could eventually lead to the need for hospitalization.

Here are some questions to ask about medications:

- What is the name of the medicine? Is this the brand or generic name? Does it matter which one is used?
- What is the medicine supposed to do?
- How and when should it be taken – and for how long?
- What foods, drinks and other medicines should be avoided while taking this medicine?
- What are the possible side effects? What should be done if they occur?

Remember your medications

Here are some ideas people use to remember their medications:

- Use a weekly pillbox – a box with seven separate compartments for the days of the week. Sometimes the boxes also have slots for four different times of the day: morning, noon, late afternoon and bedtime.
- Take medications at the same time of day so it becomes a routine.
- Take your medicines when you brush your teeth or take a shower. This will help you remember that it's time to take your pills.
- Keep a written record of when medications are taken and bring it to doctor appointments.
- If weight suddenly increases, the dose of medications may need to be temporarily increased. You need to call your doctor for instructions.

The number of pills can often seem overwhelming, especially at first

Doctors may need to prescribe many medications for heart failure because each one treats a different symptom. Each medication also comes with its own instructions and rules. This can make it difficult to remember what to take, when and how often.

Source: Indiana Chronic Disease Management Program