



Appendix B: Supporting Patients with Poor Medication Adherence

| Factors that may contribute to poor medication adherence | |
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| Clinical Factors | Environmental and Social Factors |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty using inhaler device (e.g., arthritis, cerebral palsy, Parkinson's) • Burdensome regimen (e.g., multiple administrations per day) • Multiple different inhalers • Cost | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May misunderstand instructions • Forgetfulness • Absence of a daily routine • Perception that treatment isn't necessary • Denial or anger about diagnosis or treatment • Inappropriate expectations • Concerns about side effects • Dissatisfaction with healthcare (system or provider) • Stigmatization • Cultural or religious concerns (e.g., no dairy, natural remedies only) |

Step 1: Check the medication and its usage.

Consider checking PharmaNet or the date of the last controller prescription and the date and dose counter on the inhaler.

Step 2: Ask an empathetic question.

Acknowledge the likelihood of incomplete adherence and open a non-judgemental discussion. Examples include:

- *"Do you find it easier to remember to use your inhaler in the morning, or in the evening?"*
- *"Many patients use their inhaler more (or less) often than prescribed. In the last month, how many days per week have you been taking your inhaler: 1, 2, 3, or more times?"*
- *"Sometimes patients will spread out the doses of their more expensive medications. Would a less expensive alternative be easier to take daily?"*

Step 3: Involve the patient in identifying an appropriate solution.

Explain that the most effective medication is the one that can be taken as prescribed. Acknowledge that medication is not a one-size-fits-all solution, and ask the patient what would make it easier for them to adhere. Possible solutions include:

- Setting an alarm reminder on the patient's phone (ask them to do this in the office).
- Switching to a once-daily medication.
- Switching to a lower cost medication.
- Identifying an aid or tool to help the patient take their medication comfortably.