

Transcript Details

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<https://reachmd.com/programs/medical-industry-feature/keys-to-helping-improve-medication-adherence-internal-external-resources/10642/>

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Keys to Helping Improve Medication Adherence: Internal & External Resources

Announcer: This is ReachMD. Welcome to this medical industry feature titled, “Keys to Helping Improve Medication Adherence: Internal and External Resources.” The following program has been created and paid for by Merck Sharp & Dohme Corp., a subsidiary of Merck & Co., Inc., and is intended for health care professionals in the United States. The references for the information discussed today are available in the transcript, which can be accessed on the site where you have listened to this podcast.

Let’s consider some steps that physicians and health care team members can take in the office to help improve medication adherence.

For unintentional nonadherence, you should:

- Encourage home-based reminder tools and triggers.¹
- Tailor medication-taking to daily habits, routines, and lifestyle.¹
- Suggest using automated pharmacy refill reminders.¹
- Recruit family members as medication supporters and advocates for why patients should be staying on their medication and taking it as directed.²

- Consider using blister-packaged medications to minimize misunderstandings about what medications they have to take and the number of medications that need to be taken at any given time.¹

Following up with patients may also have a significant impact on their adherence. Consider reaching out to patients 3 to 5 days after an appointment to review the treatment plan.³ You may also want to consider adding an extra follow-up visit shortly after starting a new therapy.⁴

During follow-up appointments, take the time to ask patients about medication adherence.⁵ Try to identify and address any barriers that patients may have related to adherence.⁵

Along those same lines, be sure to contact patients between office visits. This may enhance a patient's sense of being cared for by your practice. Studies show that patients appreciate and respond well to follow-up contact.

To make follow-up a part of your medication adherence strategy, consider taking the following steps⁶:

1. Identify ways to initiate and track follow-up, such as alerts in the electronic health record.
2. Determine how you will provide follow-up.
3. And lastly, identify who will do the follow-up.

Another possibility is to look at your electronic health record to see whether there are ways it may be used to address medication adherence.⁷

To find out, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Can you integrate a writable/printable PDF format of the medication list into the patient record? If so, this list can be updated during the patient visit, stored in the patient record, and printed out so that the patient can take it home.⁷
2. Can you modify the electronic health record to include *apoint-of-care* clinical reminder to assess adherence?⁷
3. Can you make patient education materials available through a simple link so the care team can print and distribute these materials easily?⁷
4. Can you establish a patient portal or online access to allow patients to better manage their own health?⁷
5. Can you have the electronic health record send you alerts for patient follow-up?⁸ For

example, if a patient misses an appointment, how is a new appointment scheduled? Does follow-up depend on the patient reaching out to make a new appointment?

Seeking help outside of the office is another possibility, as there are external resources that may help you in your efforts to improve medication adherence. For example, review the websites that are listed in this podcast transcript.

In summary, medication adherence is an important issue for patients, providers, health systems, and payers. It is also a priority for health care reform.

While we all like to get quick results, it's important to recognize that medication adherence is a marathon, not a sprint.

Thank you for your time and attention today.

Announcer: The preceding program was brought to you by Merck. To view additional programs on medication adherence from Merck, visit ReachMD.com/MedAdherence. This is ReachMD. Be Part of the Knowledge.

References:

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