



# AUBURN PHARMACY

## Adherence

### Problems taking your medications as prescribed?

Did you know that three out of four Americans struggle with taking medication according to the prescribed dose, time, frequency or directions? A breakdown in any of these prescription elements is known as non-adherence, and there are many reasons for this to occur. It could be forgetfulness, issues with being able to afford medications, or side effects that the medications cause among many others. This problem is common, and it is one that plagues the health care system.

Non-adherence costs the health care system approximately \$300 billion in extra hospital stays, doctors visits, and emergency room visits, and is considered to be one of the biggest avoidable burdens to the system. It has been shown that adherence decreases when patients are on multiple medications, multiple times per day. With reimbursement models changing, adherence is going to be a big area of focus in the coming years in order to increase patient outcomes, and pharmacy is at the forefront.

In addition to raising health system costs, non-adherence also leads to increased costs or further health problems to the patient. According to Prescriptions for America, at least 125,000 Americans die each year due to poor medication adherence. By not taking medications properly, one is not able to achieve the projected goals of therapy. This may lead to improper dosing of medications, possible increased side effects, disease progression, and possible addition of other medications to try and achieve those treatment goals. All of this could lead to more copays, more doctors office visits, and possibly more hospitalizations.

To combat non-adherence, pharmacies around the country are developing patient specific packaging to help ensure that patients are able to take their medications as prescribed. At Auburn Pharmacy, increasing a patients adherence to their medications is one of the main goals. This is why a new packaging service called EZ Med has been started. EZ Med packs are medication cards that are divided into different time of day packaging. There will be a card with all morning medications for the day in one pocket of the card, then another card for afternoon, and one for evening, given that is the patients' dosing schedule. Each pocket is easy to punch out of the card, one day at a time. This helps patients remember if they have taken their medications, and to ensure that all medications that were supposed to be taken for the day are actually taken. Each card is custom tailored to the patient, and what their medication needs may be. This also allows all medication refills to be done at the same time, which in turn helps patients budget for their medications more accurately. For the patient, this convenient packaging will help alleviate the burden of remembering to take medications on time. It could also take some of the stress off family members to know that their loved ones medications are properly packaged into convenient daily timed doses.

If you are having difficulties taking your medications as prescribed, talk to the staff at Auburn Pharmacy to see if EZ Med packaging is for you.

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KU School of Pharmacy candidate in 2017



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