

# LivingWell

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## Drugs don't work when patients don't take them

By V. Lee Jackson Carter, Pharm.D, BCACP, Senior Clinical Account Executive, Express Scripts

Have you missed a dose or taken a prescription differently than your provider prescribed it in the last week, month or year? If so, you're not alone. It's estimated that more than half of patients don't take their medications as prescribed. Adherence to (or compliance with) a medication regimen is generally defined as the extent to which patients take medication as prescribed by their health care providers. Several studies have shown that nonadherence to medications can lead to harmful outcomes. As the former Surgeon General Dr. C. Everett Koop said, "Drugs don't work when patients do not take them."

The National Council on Patient Information and Education has estimated that approximately 10 percent of hospitalizations arise due to medication nonadherence. Other studies have determined that patients who take statins for cholesterol at least 80 percent of the time had a 12 to 26 percent decrease in the likelihood of being admitted to the hospital for a cardiovascular issue (such as stroke or heart attack) compared to those who took their medication less than 80 percent of the time.

So if we know taking medications as prescribed has positive benefits, why are so many patients not able to follow the prescribed regimen? Express Scripts conducted a study that identified several causes for medication nonadherence, including forgetfulness, clinical questions, financial issues and needing a new refill or prescription. Let's face it. Life can get **busy**. See below for strategies you can use to stay on track with your medication.

### Do you sometimes forget to take your medication?

- Use a pill box to keep all of your medication in one place.
- Link taking your medication to an essential part of your daily routine. For example, place your medication beside your toothbrush for a visual reminder.
- Use a dosing reminder, such as the one available on the free Express Scripts Mobile App.

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## Flu shots save lives

You've probably gotten your flu shot by now, but what about your loved ones? According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), some groups of people are more likely to experience complications from flu that result in hospitalization or even death. Young children, adults 65 and older, and residents of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities have a higher risk for developing flu-related complications like pneumonia and bronchitis. Pregnant women (and women up to two weeks postpartum) are also at higher risk. In addition, the flu can make chronic health problems, such as asthma and heart disease worse. Dependents covered under an employee's Duke health plan can receive the seasonal flu vaccine for free. For more information, visit [flu.duke.edu/shots/](http://flu.duke.edu/shots/).

## Announcing our first Fitbit® winner

Congratulations to **Brian Bacchi** who won a Fitbit this past summer!

Click [tinyurl.com/zcu9819](http://tinyurl.com/zcu9819) and tell us where you found the pumpkin in this issue of the newsletter for your chance to win.



## Duke Fitness Club provides exercise options for the whole family

Would you go to the gym more if you went as a family? Many of our clubs offer childcare, which is included with the cost of membership at some facilities. One example is O2 Fitness, which has added 10 locations to Duke Fitness Club with facilities in Raleigh, Chapel Hill, Fuquay Varina, Cary and Wake Forest. In addition, all Triangle-area locations, Wilmington, and South Carolina locations are accessible with your membership at no extra cost. Childcare is included with membership for children under 12; just be sure to add the "Kids Club" to your membership, along with the child's name and date of birth.

Access to numerous other facilities are available through Duke Fitness Club; choose the one that offers the hours, classes and equipment that best suit your needs. And, all of our clubs offer a month-to-month commitment after you've been a member for at least three months. When joining through LIVE FOR LIFE, Duke employees receive discounts and incentives to become members at gym facilities that participate in the club. You can enroll, update and cancel your membership online at [hr.duke.edu/fitness](http://hr.duke.edu/fitness).

## Drugs don't work when patients don't take them

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### Do you ever miss doses because you forgot to refill the medication?

- Fill 90-day supplies of your medications for chronic illnesses to reduce the number of refills you need to request. This service is available through Express Scripts Mail Order or one of the Duke Pharmacies.
- Sign up for automatic refill programs.

### Do you need a new prescription from your provider?

- Check your bottle for the number of refills and the refill expiration date. Most prescriptions are good for one year from the date they were written.
- Be sure to request a new prescription from your provider several weeks before you need your last refill. They may want to see you before they refill your medication.

### Have a hard time making it to the pharmacy?

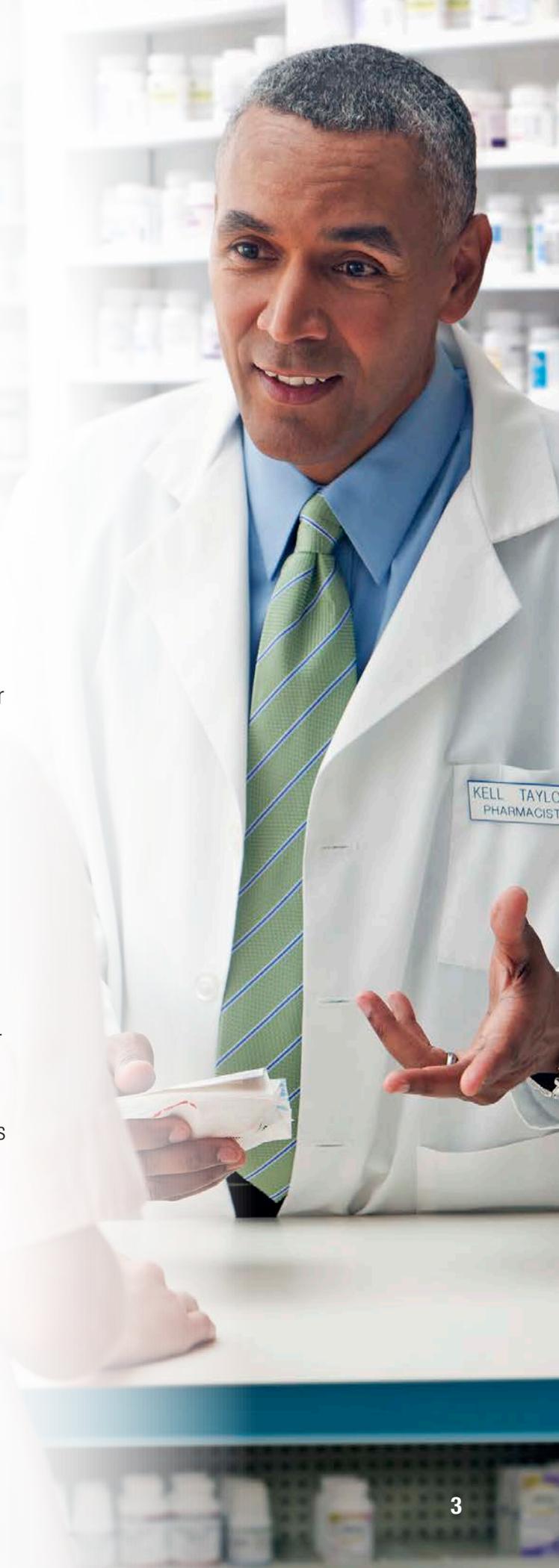
- Consider Express Scripts mail order pharmacy, which delivers your medication to your mailbox.

### Have you had trouble affording your medication?

- Talk to your pharmacist or provider regarding cost-effective alternatives.
- Use generic medications when available.
- Log on to **[www.express-scripts.com](http://www.express-scripts.com)** to search for cost-saving opportunities.
- Sign up for DukeWell care management (<https://dukewell.org/>), if you are eligible. Duke Benefits waives the copay for many generic medications, as well as insulin and diabetes test strips, for patients who participate in the program.
- Fill 90-day supplies of medications for chronic illness at Express Scripts or Duke pharmacies. Express Scripts will send you 90 days of medication and bill you one-third of the total amount each month. (Just ask for the extended payment plan option.)

### Do you have questions or concerns about your medications? Not sure what the medication is for or worried about side effects?

- Talk to your pharmacist or provider about any questions you may have. They can provide you with the answers you need to feel comfortable with your medication, or they can recommend alternatives that may have less risk of the side effect that concerns you.



## Now is the time to quit: Tobacco surcharge will increase in 2017

Tobacco use is linked to many types of cancer and often leads to chronic health problems. Because the use of tobacco drives up health care costs, Duke asked staff and faculty who smoke or use other forms of tobacco to pay more for health insurance in 2013. As of January 1, 2017, this surcharge for tobacco use is increasing to \$50 per month. Duke will remove the monthly surcharge from an employee's health insurance if he or she successfully completes a tobacco cessation program. LIVE FOR LIFE, Duke's employee wellness program, offers a number of free options to help employees quit:

- **Steps to Health Tobacco Cessation Program** is a 12-month coaching program that includes an initial consultation to develop a quit plan, as well as follow-up calls at one, three and six months and one year. Coaches provide additional resources and motivation to help you quit. Enrollment also includes access to three months of low-cost treatment at participating Duke Hospital Outpatient Pharmacies.
- **NC QuitNow** is a tobacco cessation telephone counseling service staffed by trained quitting specialists.

- **Over-the-counter Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)** is used to gradually wean tobacco users from nicotine dependence, NRT is available in the form of a patch, gum or lozenge when used in conjunction with one of the LIVE FOR LIFE tobacco cessation programs.
- **Prescription medications** Eligible employees and their dependents enrolled in a LIVE FOR LIFE tobacco cessation program can qualify to receive a three-month supply of the stop smoking prescription drugs CHANTIX™ (varenicline) or Bupropion. If your physician recommends additional treatment cycles, subsequent fulfillments will be at a discounted rate.

Quitting can be challenging, but it's well worth it — and not just to save \$600 per year on your health insurance coverage. The U.S. Surgeon General says quitting tobacco is the single most important thing smokers can do to enhance the length and quality of their lives. Millions have done it, and you can too! Eligibility requirements vary. Please check the web pages of individual programs for information at [hr.duke.edu/tobaccofree](http://hr.duke.edu/tobaccofree) or call **919-684-3136**, option **1**.





## Cultivate an attitude of gratitude

As the Thanksgiving holiday approaches, consider the benefits of being more grateful as you go about your daily activities. People who express gratitude in their everyday lives have been found to be healthier, happier and more optimistic than those who don't make a practice of gratitude. Numerous studies indicate that the simple act of writing down your blessings on a regular basis can improve both your mental and physical health. This may be because people who maintain a mindset of gratitude are more likely to care for themselves by eating healthy foods, committing to an exercise routine and seeing their doctor. They also tend to sleep better and experience less pain.

If you cultivate a grateful attitude, you tend to be more emotionally resilient when you experience life's inevitable stresses. You may also be more likely to seek help during times of need. Having a sunny outlook can contribute to strengthening your immune system, which helps you fight off illnesses more effectively. Demonstrating empathy and gratitude toward others contributes to building closer social ties. If you feel grateful for all that you have, you're more likely to reach out to others — and to receive a positive response in return.

Gratitude can help you on the job as well. Those of us who are thankful also tend to be more productive. Without the burdens of worry and negativity, we're able to focus on completing work that is meaningful to us. Grateful people may be more willing to take appropriate risks, such as seeking a promotion — and then reap the rewards that come from believing in yourself.

Are wealthier people more grateful? Research suggests otherwise. Grateful people, rather than being those who have

the most, tend to be those folks who focus less on material wealth. Being grateful for what you have diffuses the urge to compare yourself negatively to others or resent those who are better off. Instead, grateful people tend to appreciate others' successes and empathize with those who have less.

There is even evidence that being grateful helps us focus on happy memories rather than sad ones, remember negative experiences in a more positive light or identify the positives in past negative situations. Happier long-term relationships can be the result, as partners focus on all the good times they've had together, rather than dwelling on the tough times.

### Here's how you can develop a more grateful mindset:

- Spend a few minutes before bed thinking about what made you grateful that day.
- Thank others for kindnesses, large and small.
- Help others. You don't need a regular volunteer job. You can offer to run an errand for an elderly neighbor or check in with a friend who's having a rough time. You'll be more appreciative of all you have and feel good about helping someone else.
- Write a letter to someone you love explaining what you value about that person and how much he or she means to you.
- Use positive language when referring to yourself and others. Positive characterizations can put you in a positive frame of mind.



## Make your resolutions stick in the New Year

We often forget our New Year's resolutions once the afterglow of the holidays has faded and the daily grind returns. Making positive habits last past mid-January involves numerous components.

Here are some tips to help you commit to long-term change:

- **Write it down.** Put your commitments to yourself on paper and post the list where you'll see it daily. Five goals are plenty. Make them specific, achievable, and easy to measure. Include a brief list of the daily habits that will help you reach each goal.
- **Start small.** You wouldn't expect to earn a promotion overnight or bench press 150 pounds on your first day at the gym. Give yourself permission to start slowly and build up gradually. Want to start exercising but have been inactive for years? Start with a 10-minute walk three times a week.
- **Change comes from within.** Base your goals on factors you can control, not on the actions or cooperation of others.
- **Replace negative behaviors with positive ones.** Instead of resolving to stop eating junk food, add a snack of fresh fruit into your daily meal plan. Instead of swearing off television completely, replace 30 minutes of screen time with 30 minutes of another activity that's enjoyable, like stretching or reading a book.
- **Foster positive habits.** Take brushing your teeth as an example. For kids, it can be an onerous chore, but adults usually don't give it a second thought. Many positive behaviors like taking the stairs or drinking water can become second nature if we consciously make them part of our daily routine.
- **Mix it up!** Let's face it; we're more likely to stick with healthy habits when we can keep them fresh and fun. Explore the produce section of the grocery store and buy a fruit or vegetable you've never tried before. Alternate gym visits with a power walk in the park, or enjoy a game of hide-and-seek tag with the kids. New experiences keep us motivated.
- **Be gentle with yourself.** Berating yourself for giving in to temptation or failing to meet a goal only makes you less likely to stick to your resolutions. Embrace every victory and forgive yourself if you fall short — it's all necessary for growth.

Be aware that your goals will probably evolve over time. Think about what is truly important to you and what will improve your life. If pursuing a particular goal isn't increasing your sense of well-being, maybe it's time to reconsider. Is it still important to you to pursue that objective, or would your energy be better spent elsewhere? Give yourself the permission to change goals that aren't serving you well. Accept yourself as you are right now, and acknowledge that adopting new habits can improve your life and make you happier.

## I'm listening: Communication tips for work and home

### Being an effective communicator requires patience and practice.

Each person you speak with brings his or her emotions and preconceptions to the table, and your meaning can easily be misconstrued. Improving your communication skills can transform the quality of your interactions with other people — both at home and in the workplace. One way to improve is to listen to others in earnest. When you listen actively, you respond both verbally and nonverbally to the other person. Rephrasing what the other person has said can help clarify what he or she means and shows that you are fully engaged in the conversation.



**Body language is also critical.** Do you smile when you deliver good news to your boss? Do your facial expressions convey concern when you listen to your teen's worries? You want to try to match your tone of voice and your body language to your meaning. Appropriate eye contact is a key component of effective body language. Avoiding eye contact can make you seem untrustworthy or unsure of yourself. Others may perceive too much eye contact as overly aggressive behavior.



### Smart phones have become essential tools for communicating — but not when you use one while you're enjoying someone's company.

We all know the dangers of texting and driving, but consider the hazards of trying to carry on a conversation while looking at your phone. The person you're with may feel hurt, angry or neglected if he or she has to share your attention with an electronic device.

**Avoid interrupting others.** If we don't agree with what is being said or think of something important we want to share, it can be difficult to resist the urge to interrupt. Try to remain fully focused on the other person's words. If you're thinking about what **you** will say next, you often disengage from what the other person is actually saying.

### "Redirection" at an inappropriate time in the conversation is another common pitfall.

We've all had the experience of trying to tell a story, but our listener hijacks the conversation and makes it about himself. Or, our listener abruptly changes the subject to what he or she wants to discuss. A central principle of effective communication is to treat the other person as you would like to be treated. Make an effort to listen to the other person first before turning the conversation to your own experiences or changing the subject before you're both ready to move on.

**Remember to use "I" statements — especially during times of conflict.** Sentences that begin with "I feel" or "I think" show you're taking responsibility for your own thoughts and feelings while communicating there is a problem that involves the listener. An "I" statement, such as "I was hurt when you forgot my birthday," is non-confrontational. Saying, "You're so selfish for forgetting my birthday" is likely to put the listener on the defensive and prevent meaningful dialogue.

### Dialect, delivery and body language vary widely from person to person.

Embrace the great diversity of communication styles. Keep in mind that the way people interpret each other's cues are affected by both emotional states and cultural differences. Remember, there is no foolproof way to interpret another person's meaning. The best we can do is observe carefully, listen fully and gather information from the entirety of the speaker's conversation — not just a few gestures or turns of phrase.



### If you're not sure how others perceive you, ask a trusted friend or family member for feedback.

Someone you're close to can help you role-play an important conversation you plan to have, so you can practice your delivery in addition to the points you want to cover. You can learn from paying careful attention to others' reactions during casual conversations with strangers, such as the cashier at the grocery store. Finally, practicing in front of a mirror may feel silly, but it's an effective way to fine tune your gestures, verbal habits and mannerisms.



## Update on the Duke Mobile Market

The Duke Mobile Market offers many benefits to both Duke employees and the larger community. Through the market, you can access reliable and reasonably priced produce at the peak of freshness. Our local vendors provide a wide range of high-quality (often organic) products to Duke faculty and staff. The market connects you to the farmers who bring fresh produce straight from the fields to your workplace. Growers are provided with a guaranteed way to sell what their farms produce at a fair price.

You can also feel good about the fact that keeping your food purchases close to home benefits our local economy. Eating local reduces your carbon footprint as well, since less energy is used to transport your food. Duke is proud to support traditional North Carolina farmers as they transition to environmentally sustainable and organic production methods.

We look forward to connecting you to the CSA (Community-Supported Agriculture) that meets your needs, so you can have weekly or biweekly produce boxes delivered conveniently to your home or workplace. Contact Cassandra Callas at **1-919-681-0547** if you are interested in establishing customized CSA delivery onsite with your department. The Duke Mobile Market CSA Program is ongoing with customized home delivery options in addition to the following worksite delivery location:

### **Duke Raleigh Hospital**

**Time:** Tuesdays from 4:45 to 5:15 p.m.

**Dates:** April through December

**Location:** P1 South Parking Garage,  
lower level entrance

Visit this web page for detailed information about the Duke Mobile Market:

<https://hr.duke.edu/wellness/mobile-farmers-market>



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