

# MEDICATION ADHERENCE & YOU

*A patient's guide to  
understanding why you  
should take your  
prescription medications  
"as directed."*



**SMARTFILL**

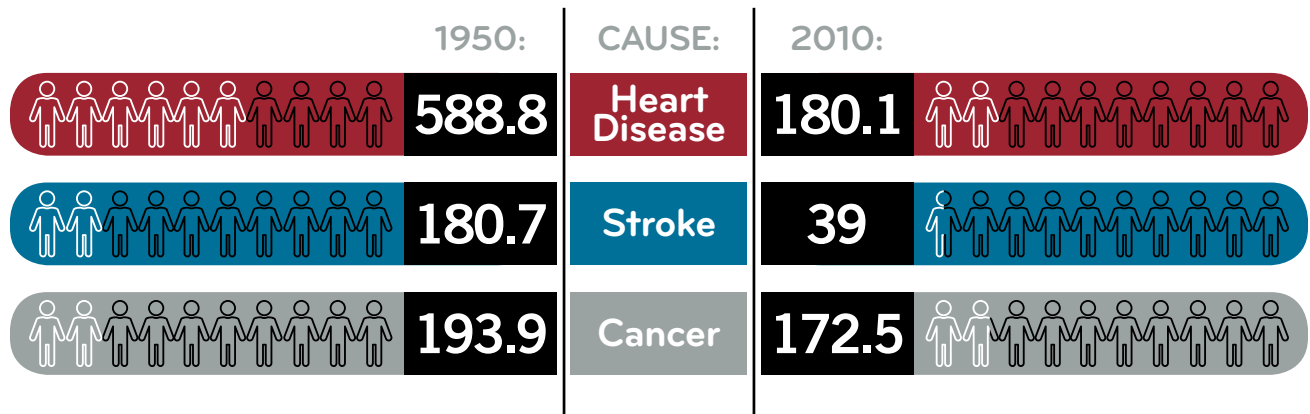
It takes **12 years** to  
**formulate a prescription drug** from  
an idea to your pharmacist's shelf.

That's a long period of **development,**  
**testing, and clinical**  
**trials** to get the  
chemistry *just right...*



All this research has enabled scientists to **save or extend the lives of millions** of patients suffering from a range of diseases.

## DEATHS PER 1,000 PEOPLE



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and National Center for Health Statistics. National Vital Statistics System. 2011. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss.htm>. Accessed 11/12/12.

And yet, half of patients prescribed medications don't take their meds correctly. **Why?**

*"It costs too much."*

*"It's not working."*

*"I'm too busy."*

*"I don't want the side effects."*

*"It's too complex."*

*"Natural cures are better."*

*"I'm on vacation and forgot my meds."*

*"I just forget."*

*"What if there are long-term effects?"*

*"What's the value?"*



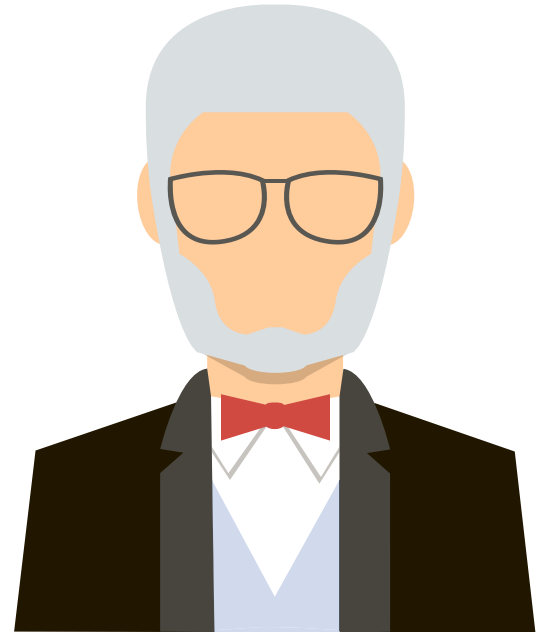
“ Drugs don’t work in those who don’t take them. ”

— C. Everett Koop, Surgeon General

### What is non-adherence?

Simply put, being non-adherent means not taking your medications as directed. This can include:

- Forgetting or missing doses
- Taking a lower dose
- Not refilling on time or at all
- Stopping a medication completely



## Non-adherence results in:

- Thirty to 50 percent of treatment failures and 125,000 deaths annually. (1)
- Unexpected complications and increased visits to the emergency room.
- Hospital readmissions—17 percent more frequently. (2)
- Higher costs for the healthcare system—between \$100 billion and \$289 billion annually. (3)



Taking your medications as prescribed is not just about **keeping you out of the emergency room.**

Taking charge of your health, including prescription adherence, will help you to **live your life more fully** and keep doing the activities you enjoy.



The number one driver of good adherence is having a relationship with a pharmacist. **Talk with your pharmacist** to proactively address the concerns you have about taking your medications and to look for ways to help simplify how you take them.

### **Tips for taking all your meds:**

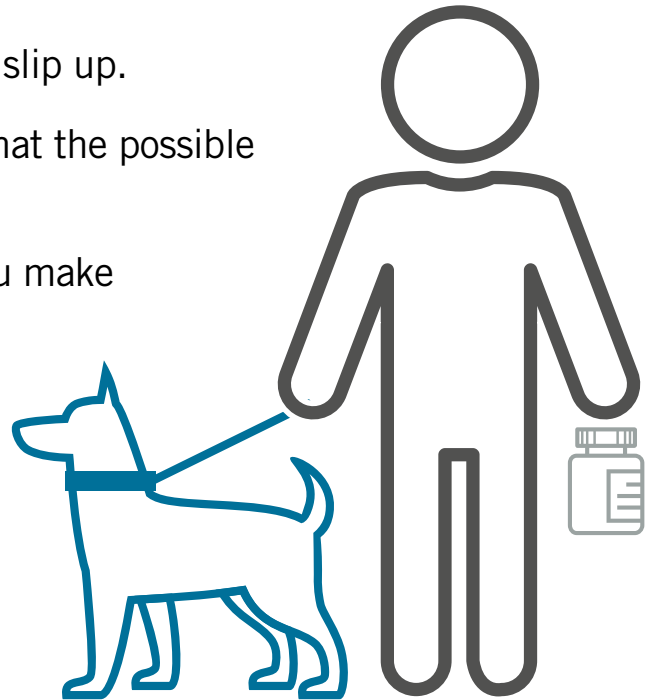
- Talk to your pharmacist on a regular basis.
- Store all of your prescriptions in the same place.
- Ask for help from a friend or family member.
- Take your medication(s) at the same time every day.
- Use a pillbox at home.





## Tips for taking all your meds: (Continued)

- Consider mobile tools that remind you to take your meds; if you have a mobile phone, set appointments for yourself that correspond with your prescription schedule.
- Develop coping strategies for when you slip up.
- Learn why each pill is important and what the possible side effects may be.
- Ask about special packaging to help you make sense of which pills to take when.
- Associate it with another daily activity (e.g. cooking, watching the news, walking the dog).
- Place a sticky note somewhere you will see it every day (e.g. by the kitchen sink or on the telephone).



## Want to take charge of your health?

Talk to your pharmacist today about improving your medication adherence.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

[American Diabetes Association](#)

[American Heart Association](#)

[Alzheimer's Association](#)

### REFERENCES:

(1) [The Atlantic](#)

(2) [National Center for Biotechnology Information](#)

(3) [New England Journal of Medicine](#)

