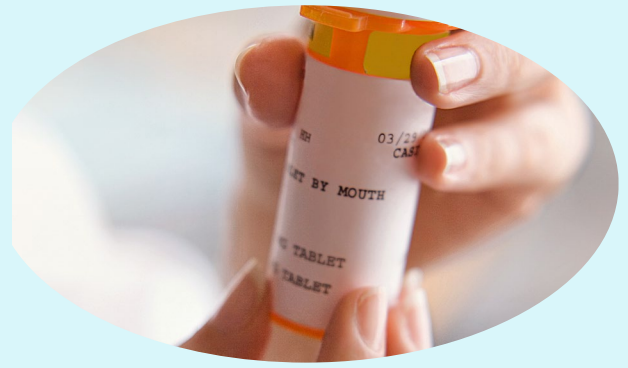




Medication Adherence

For patients with schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder

Medication non-adherence rates for schizophrenic patients averages between 56%-60%.¹

Medication adherence is a major challenge—especially for patients with schizophrenia and schizoaffective disorder for the following reasons: ^{2,3}

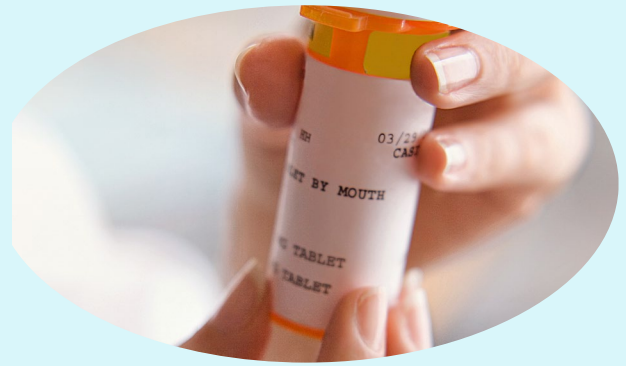
- Negative attitudes toward medication
- Internalized stigma
- Irregular appointment attendance
- Doubts about recovery
- Not taking medications as prescribed

Recommendations for promoting medication adherence

Patients diagnosed with schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder should continue prescribed medication(s) for **at least 80% of their treatment period** (the time from first script fill to end of calendar year).⁴

Support medication adherence with simple, proactive steps:

- **Start the conversation:** Talk openly about medications, the treatment plan and how to reduce symptoms
- **Review side effects:** Encourage questions—especially if a dose is missed or the patient is considering stopping their medication
- **Check in often:** Regularly ask patients if they're taking their medications
- **Share practical tips:**
 - Take medications at the same time daily
 - Use a pill box
 - Sign up for automatic pharmacy refills



- **Optimize treatment**
 - Consider [long-acting injectables \(LAIs\)](#) or 90-day prescriptions
 - Use screening tools to track progress and adjust plans as needed
- **Involve family:** Educate family members for awareness and to help support adherence; when family members and/or significant others understand the illness, patients show better medication compliance and greater awareness of their condition ⁵
- **Telehealth visits:** Offer an effective and convenient way to provide behavioral health care.

Helpful tools and resources

- **Behavioral health providers:** [Clinical and Quality Measures Toolkit for Behavioral Providers](#)
- **Medical providers:** [Behavioral Health Toolkit for Medical Providers](#)
- [Information about Long-Acting Injectables](#)
- [Live and Work Well:](#) Find relevant articles and resources for patients (guest access code: clinician)
- [Coordination of Care:](#) Information and resources to help manage care and increase awareness between medical and behavioral health providers.

¹ National Committee for Quality Assurance HEDIS® Specifications; see State of Healthcare Quality Report, Adherence to Antipsychotic Medications for Individuals with Schizophrenia (SAA) at NCQA.org.

² Lacro, Jonathan P., et. al. (2002). Prevalence of and Risk Factors for Medication Nonadherence in Patients with Schizophrenia: A Comprehensive Review of Recent Literature. *J Clin Psychiatry*, 63 (October): 892.

³ Karabulut, Buse and Uslu, Esra. (2024). Schizophrenia and medication adherence: Associated factors. *Archives of Psychiatric Nursing*, 49 (April): 47-54.

⁴ National Committee for Quality Assurance 2024 HEDIS® Specifications; see HEDIS® and Quality Measures at NCQA.org.

⁵ Marder, S. R. (1998). Facilitating compliance with antipsychotic medication. *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, 59 (Suppl 3), 21-25.