

Plan for Health: October 2022



This month's highlights include the Importance of Medication and Immunizations.

The Importance of Medication

October is Medication Education Month! Taking medication as prescribed is an important task to many Americans. Taking prescribed medication treats temporary and chronic conditions. Non-adherence to taking medications can cause chronic disease treatment failure or even death. Many people fail to take their medications as prescribed due to lack of understanding of the importance of it, lack of education, forgetfulness, or unpleasant side effects. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), 20-30% of new prescriptions are never filled and medication is not taken as prescribed 50% of the time. For those with chronic diseases, after 6 months, many people take less medication than they are supposed to or stop all together.

Taking medication can be tedious but here are some tips that may help:

- Take your medication at the same time every day.
- Tie taking your medications with a daily routine like brushing your teeth or getting ready for bed. Before choosing mealtime for your routine, check if your medication should be taken on a full or empty stomach.
- Keep a "medicine calendar" with your pill bottles and note each time you take a dose.
- Use a pill container. Some types have sections for multiple doses at different times, such as morning, lunch, evening, and night.
- When using a pill container, refill it at the same time each week. For example, every Sunday morning after breakfast.
- Purchase timer caps for your pill bottles or a pill box with a timer function. You can set them to go off when your next dose is due.
- When travelling, be certain to bring enough of your medication, plus a few days extra, in case your return is delayed. If you're flying, keep your medication in your carry-on bag to avoid lost luggage.

**Tips from FDA.gov*

The Importance of Immunizations

Immunizations are important in protecting you and your children from harmful diseases and can prevent spread of diseases to others. Different types of vaccines work in different ways to offer protection and it typically takes a few weeks for immunity to build up. The CDC and FDA take many steps to ensure that vaccines are tested and safe for the public to use.

Here's how vaccines work:

- When germs enter the body, they multiply and attack causing an invasion. The body uses white blood cells to fight infections. After you have an infection, the immune system starts to remember how to protect the body against that particular disease.
- Vaccines can protect against disease by imitating an infection. This type of infection teaches the body how to fight off the disease. Minor symptoms may occur when vaccinated, but these symptoms are normal.
- It can take several weeks for immunity to build after getting a vaccine. Vaccines are the safest way to protect against certain diseases. However, no vaccine is perfect. It is still possible to get a disease even when vaccinated but the person is less likely to become seriously ill.

To download Highmark's Preventive Schedule including Immunizations for Adults and Children, go to your Highmark Member Portal. Sign in and click Coverage → Preventive Services → Download Preventive Schedule.

Sharecare Featured Challenge

A simple way to help slow the spread of germs in addition to immunizations, washing your hands! Join the **Stop the Spread Challenge** this October. Track for 21 days that you washed your hands well and often to complete the challenge! Join the challenge by clicking Achieve → Challenges → Stop the Spread Challenge beginning on 9/25.

Plan Ahead: Join us next month for **November's** health topics:

Be Tobacco-Free Wellness Coaching Program and the Great American Smokeout