ADHERENCE

OVERVIEW
The terms adherence and compliance are often used interchangeably, although there is a major difference. Adherence is the term used to describe a patient’s behavior of taking medications correctly: in the right dose, with the right frequency, and at the right time. The term adherence describes a therapeutic alliance between the prescriber and the patient, where the patient has an active role in following a therapeutic regimen. On the other hand, compliance means the patient passively follows what he or she has been told to do by the prescriber or the pharmacist.

RELEVANCE FOR MS
In multiple sclerosis, adherence is critical to the successful management of the disease. Multiple sclerosis challenges one’s ability to be adherent as it is a chronic, lifelong disease. For some persons their disease may be quiet for periods of time, and this may contribute to a person feeling that they may not need a medication all the time. It is important for persons with MS to understand the nature of their disease and understand why to take a medication and what to expect of the medication.

Multiple factors can interfere with adherence, including side effects, pill burden, forgetfulness, cost, depression, and an ineffective support system. Lack of adherence to a disease modifying medication leads to higher risk of relapses, MRI activity, disability, increased medical costs, loss of time from work, and decreased quality of life. Lack of adherence to medication for MS symptoms can also lead to a higher risk for disability, increased medical cost, loss of time from work, and decreased quality of life.

ABOUT YOU
_____ I understand the benefit of my medication.
_____ I understand what my medication will not do for me.
_____ I understand how I am to take my medication.
_____ I understand the side effects of my medication.
_____ I understand how to minimize side effects of my medication.
_____ I understand the monitoring required for my medication.
_____ I am aware of resources to help me with the cost of my medication.
_____ I understand if my insurance changes, I need to tell my prescriber and supplier of my medication immediately.
_____ I have a good relationship with my prescriber.
_____ I have a system to help me remember to take my medication.
_____ I have support of others to help me adhere to my medication.
_____ I believe I take medication to be active in the care of my MS.
_____ I am helping myself stay well with MS.

RESOURCES
Website for the pharmaceutical company who makes your medication.
http://rxhope.com
http://rxassist.org
www.needymeds.org
http://www.pparx.org

www.DialogsInMS.org