

10 tips to help you stick to your medication regimen



BEFORE, WITH OR AFTER MEALS: Talk to your pharmacist or ensure you read the packet insert on your specific medication to be certain how your medication should be taken.

ZWELAKHE SHANGASE

MANY South Africans are prescribed medication for depression, bipolar disease, anxiety and a variety of other mental illnesses.

However, many of them are sometimes not informed about what they can expect from their medication.

On Friday the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (Sadag) held live Facebook chats with two expert psychiatrists, Greg Johnson and Rita Thom, and addressed various questions.

The live chat covered questions on if someone is experiencing side effects and needs advice, which medication/treatment to take for a particular disease or ailment.

Sadag's Cassey Chambers said: "It's vital for your long-term wellbeing and health that we can access information regarding our treatment, but sometimes doctors don't have time to give us all the information we need."

Chambers also offered top 10 tips to help people stick to their treatment/medication regimen.

- Know the facts – know how you are supposed to take your medication. Go over your prescription with your doctor or pharmacist.

- Food and water – if you need to take your medication on an empty stomach, take it at least one hour before a meal. If it



medication.

- Get support – don't be afraid to ask your family or friends for help. There is no shame in asking someone to help remind you to take your medication.

- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist – don't be afraid to ask them about anything you do not understand. Be honest with your doctor on how you feel. Let your doctor know if you are on another medication they didn't prescribe.

- Pill box – try using a pill box to help you organise your medication. This will help you to stick to your medication schedule.

- Keep a mood diary and medication list – list and keep track of your mood and your medication.

- Side-effects – these can be expected, however, they are easily manageable. Most importantly, don't stop taking your medication without talking to your doctor.

When feeling better, worse, or no different – medication doesn't start working immediately, you need to give it at least a few weeks. It is very important that you stick to your medication even when you feel that it is not working and even when you are feeling better.

- Keep it close and visible – keep your medication in an easy-to-spot place at home. It is also useful to keep some at your work or office, in case you forget to take them with you.

zwelakhesh@thenewage.co.za

should be taken with food, then take it after a full meal and not just a snack.

- Set a reminder – set an alarm on your watch or cellphone to help remind you about your