

Promoting Good Adherence

Adherence begins at enrollment. Rewarding good behavior doesn't take as much time as counseling patients with poor adherence or loss of interest in continuation. So watch for important warning signs in your conversations with the patient and put notes in the chart so you can follow-up at the next contact. Be proactive.

A lot of staff time can be spent attempting multiple calls when trying to locate a patient. To avoid this, document multiple contacts for the patient so you can stay in touch. Document their home address and home and cell phone numbers, e-mail, employer information, and a contact who doesn't live with them but would know how to get in contact with them. They may have a second address where they live during winter or summer months. Between visits, you can also call or email friendly messages to promote retention and adherence, remind them of their next visit, or send them health information they requested from previous contacts. This will promote bonding since this is a long term study being done with healthy people.

Being proactive:

Holidays, vacations, business travel, and changes in work schedules are a few things that can throw off a routine. So engage your patient in conversation at each visit or phone contact and, if they happen to mention any triggers (see Warning Signs of Poor Adherence) that might suggest they are having a problem with the study or a lack of interest, consider some of these suggestions:

1. Suggest they purchase a pill dispenser at the local drug store or pharmacy to make it easier to travel with the study drugs and to carry with them in a purse or pocket.
2. Suggest they keep their Intake Calendar and a pen near where they keep the study drugs as a reminder to take and record their study drug intake.
3. Suggest they enlist the help of a family member or co-worker to remind them to take their study drugs.
4. If the patient mentions work schedule changes or transportation issues, try to schedule future clinic visits that will fit his or her needs.
5. If you notice the patient has arthritic hands, you might want to suggest they ask the pharmacy for a non-child proof cap to make it easier to open the study drug bottles.
6. Note the patient's birth month and send a birthday card from the PACES staff.

Strategies for improving poor adherence taking the study drugs:

1. Discuss what other daily routines they have such as brushing their teeth morning and night that can help them remember, such as putting their study drug bottles near their toothbrush.
2. If they have a smart phone perhaps they could set a timer. If they work on a computer or laptop, they could also set a timer as a reminder.
3. If they carry their study drug bottles with them to work or travel but then forget or lose them, advise them of the value of using a pill dispenser. If possible, purchase a few dispensers that

you can have available to offer to patients with poor adherence. Just remind them to be sure to empty any study drugs from the dispenser back into the bottles before they return for a PACES clinic visit.

Strategies for improving poor adherence to clinic visits:

1. Ask the participant what would make it easier for him or her to keep their clinic visit.
2. Be prepared to offer alternative schedules due to a participant's work schedule, daycare needs, school schedule, or other personal needs.
3. Offer weekend or evening hours when available.
4. Parking costs may be a problem so ask your Investigator or Administrator if there are any discretionary funds available to assist with full or partial reimbursement.
5. Parking availability may be an issue so have a map ready to show where there may be alternative or cheaper parking. Be sure the map is accurate!
6. The patient may be uncomfortable for some reason with the staff. When possible, you may want to offer to have the patient meet with another staff member.
7. You may need to send additional reminders prior to a clinic visit schedule or call the patient a few days before their visit.

Strategies for handling loss of enthusiasm to continue to participate:

1. Probe carefully to rule out other problems such as dislike of the study drugs or problems with staff or parking.
2. Reinforce the value and importance of their participation in this national study to prevent recurrent colon cancer.
3. Offer to have the Investigator available to meet with or call the patient.

Thank the patient for their participation in the study at every visit!