

Children's Hospital of Illinois

## **ADHERENCE AND CYSTIC FIBROSIS (CF) INFORMATION SHEET**

### **WHAT IS ADHERENCE?**

Cystic Fibrosis is a life-long illness. At times, you may need to take many medications in addition to doing other treatments to help you breathe comfortably. Adherence, or following a plan that you and your CF team agree on, can help you lead a better life with CF. Adherence means:

- Taking your medications and doing your treatments (airway clearance) as agreed upon with your CF team.
- Keeping routine, follow-up, appointments at your CF center
- Trying to follow lifestyle changes that are suggested by your CF team such as exercising more, following a specific diet and not smoking.

### **IS THERE ANYONE WHO CAN HELP YOU STAY ADHERENT?**

Although most of the responsibility will be in your hands, there are many people who can help you. First, your CF team can help you by giving you the information you need to take all your medications and do all your treatments. It is important for you to be honest with the team so that a plan that works for you can be developed. Others who can help include your parents, friends, teachers or coaches. Basically anyone who is a support person for you can help you stay on track.

### **WHAT ARE SOME STRATEGIES FOR STAYING ADHERENT?**

- Ask questions!!!! Remember there are no stupid questions. It may be helpful for you to write down all your questions before you come to clinic.
- Use a pillbox and keep your CF care plan close by (taped to your refrigerator or bedroom door).
- Do something fun while using your airway clearance device (Vest<sup>®</sup>, Flutter<sup>®</sup>, Acapella<sup>®</sup>) such as watching TV, listening to the radio, playing a video game or chatting on-line.
- Ask for support when you need it - from your family, friends, co-workers, CF team, counselor, church, or support group
- Keep track of scheduled appointments on a calendar or post a note on the refrigerator. Do this as soon as you get the date of your next appointment.

- Self-monitor by keeping a written diary of your care. This includes medications, symptoms, clinic appointments and hospitalizations.
- Keep track of the things that make it hard for you to stick to your treatment plan.
- Ask your CF social worker for assistance with resources for financial and transportation issues.

**WHAT ARE SOME THINGS THAT MAKE IT HARD FOR YOU TO STAY ADHERENT?**

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