Adherence and the Web
By Evan Schnur, PharmD

A quick Google search for “medication adherence tools” results in more than 300,000 hits, but which sites should pharmacists use and recommend to their patients? The growing attention to medication non-adherence has created a wealth of information on the topic. Choosing the right tool for your patients often requires further investigation.

When recommending a tool or service to your patients, be sure to try out the service first for yourself. Recommending an adherence tool that doesn’t meet the needs of your patients probably won’t provide for any increased adherence, so it’s important to choose a reliable and user-friendly adherence program. NCPA’s Stick-2theScript (www.stick2thescript.org) and the National Consumers League’s Script Your Future (www.scriptyourfuture.org) sites have a wealth of information about medication non-adherence, as well as guides, tools, and services to increase patient adherence. Be sure to check out the health care provider sections of each site for tools directly geared for pharmacists and other health-care providers.

Medication calendars can be a great tool to help patients keep track of their medications. MyMedSchedule (www.mymedschedule.com) is one such tool and allows patients to create an electronic medication profile that includes what medications they are taking, when they should take them, and when they’ll need to call for a refill. Best of all, the service is completely free for anyone to use.

The website allows patients to set up custom reminders for all of their medications. They can choose to receive a text message, email, or both when it’s time to take a dose. Also, the site allows patients to track important information about each medication, including what it’s used for, and what side effects might occur. The refill reminder feature is very helpful too. It allows patients to enter in when they last filled their prescription and for what days supply it was filled. Then, the service will email them a week before a prescription is due for a refill. Patients can even enter in the prescription number and pharmacy phone number, so they can instantly call in the refills when they receive their reminder.

MyMedSchedule is just one example of the many offerings available to help patients and providers curb the problem of medication non-adherence. One of the greatest benefits of these reminder-based services is that they help patients fit their medication regimens into their very busy lives.

Keeping a patient’s medication regimen at the forefront through consistent reminders is an excellent way to boost adherence. Take some time to familiarize yourself with some of the tools that are available to help encourage better adherence and find one you feel confident recommending to your patients.

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Evan Schnur, PharmD, was a student at St. Louis College of Pharmacy at the time of writing.