

Example Strategies for Family Caregivers when Experiencing Challenges in Giving Medication

Disclaimer: The tips provided are recommendations to help support responsive behaviour management. However, if behaviours persist, please consult with your care team for further guidance.

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Here are some tips you can try when a person with dementia does not want to take their medication:

Offer choice: Give the person with dementia a sense of control and independence by offering them a closed-ended choice, with a maximum of 2 options. For instance, you might say, "Which pill do you want to take first, this one or that one?" Or "Would you like to sit here near the window or by your bed while taking your medication?" Or "Would you like to take your pills now or in 10 minutes?" Offer choice of beverages person with dementias can take the pill with (e.g. Would you like some juice or water? Apple or orange juice? Apple sauce or pudding?)

Give a heads up: Inform the person with dementia of what is going to happen before it happens. For example, if medication is scheduled for 4pm, inform them at 3:45 pm that you'll be coming back in 15 minutes so they can take their medication. You may even want to set an egg timer for 15 minutes, and tell them that when it rings, you'll be back to give them their medication.

Provide a written schedule: For persons with dementia who are able to read and appreciate a schedule, create a schedule that outlines the activities of the day. Include things such as meal times, toileting, showers, recreational activities and medication times. Allow the person with dementia to hold on to the schedule, and refer to it as needed. Be consistent and make sure you stick to any schedule you provide. Make sure the written schedule is tailored for the person with dementia's unique needs (e.g. large enough font, contrast, text that is clear, and written in their preferred or first language, and consider the use of pictures or images to illustrate the scheduled activities).