

ENHANCING COMPLIANCE

The key to enhancing compliance in adolescents lies in:

- establishing a trusting relationship with the young person
- actively involving them in the development of an individualised treatment plan
- engaging the active support of the family (with the consent of the young person)
- understanding their cultural background and any traditional treatments and explanations of illness in their culture

Information and Education

- Adolescents are more likely to adhere to a treatment plan if:
 - they understand the nature of and reasons for medications/treatments
 - treatment is given in the context of an effective doctor-patient relationship
 - some choice is offered with respect to treatment where possible
- Enquire about any cultural factors which may impact on their level of compliance and discuss with the young person and their parents
 - e.g. there may be particular cultural beliefs about the illness or certain treatments that act as a barrier to compliance
- Provide treatment options and, where possible, give the young person a choice in selecting treatments
- Give reasons for selecting a particular course of treatment
- Discuss the likely outcomes and possible side-effects of treatment
- Educate them about correct use of medication/treatment procedures
- Communicate and provide instructions in a way that is appropriate to the age and developmental stage of the young person

Strategies for Enhancing Compliance

- Listen to the young person's perspective and concerns – e.g.
 - concern about how a treatment regime might disrupt their school or social life
 - embarrassment about the reactions of peers
- Negotiate a mutually acceptable and flexible management plan
 - involve the young person in developing a treatment plan that is flexible and takes into account their lifestyle, and the broader priorities and realities of their everyday life (e.g. school; sports; peers)
 - be prepared to accept a less than optimal treatment plan (at least initially) so as to maximise the possibility of compliance
 - keep it simple and minimise the amount of medications that the young person needs to carry with them
- Build motivation to comply
 - identify the pros and cons of different treatment options
 - discuss how likely they are to carry out the plan
 - identify possible barriers to compliance with the plan
 - identify what could assist them to comply

ADOLESCENT HEALTH RESOURCE KIT
PRACTICE POINTS

- **Promote and support the young person's decision-making**
 - encourage autonomy and responsibility for following the treatment plan through
 - **Educate the young person about the tasks to be performed in plain, jargon-free language**
 - keep instructions brief, clear and simple
 - repeat important points and check understanding by asking questions
 - improve understanding and recall by asking them to repeat instructions
 - **For NESB young people** – ensure that their (and their parents') level of English is proficient enough for them to understand the instructions
 - use the **Translating and Interpreter Service (TIS)** if you feel the instructions need to be explained in the patient's language – see **Section 4** for contact details
 - **Set short-term goals**
 - personalised goals provide motivation for complying with the treatment
 - set goals that are concrete and relevant to their current circumstances – such as being able to play sport; go on a camp; or attend a social event
- Example:*
“Michael you said that you really want to go on the school camp this year. Let's work on getting your asthma under control so that you will be able to attend the camp.”
- **Provide anticipatory guidance**
 - identify obstacles and situations where it may be difficult to comply (e.g. pressure from friends; social situations)
 - explore these difficulties by working through realistic scenarios that they may encounter
 - identify strategies for dealing with barriers to compliance
 - **Involve other key people**
 - where appropriate, involve parents and other family members in supporting the young person to carry out their treatment regime
 - **Maintain contact**
 - provide follow-up support via regular consultations, telephone contact, or by letter
 - encourage the young person to communicate about their successes and difficulties
 - **Respond to non-adherence**
 - acknowledge in a non-judgmental way that there may be non-adherence
 - help the young person to identify strategies for overcoming their difficulties to compliance
 - re-negotiate an alternative treatment regime if necessary