



Module 5, Vignette 2, Strategies To Improve Adherence

Katie Whitmire, NP-c, BC-ADM, CDCES and one of her patients

Patient: I have to admit that I think that part of why my sugar is not where it should be is that I forget a lot to take my insulin. Like, I'll sit down and drink my coffee or start to eat and realize that I forgot, or I'll go to bed and realize that I didn't take my insulin when I wake up.

Ms Whitmire: Gotcha. So, you're forgetting to give your shots a lot.

Patient: Yes.

Ms Whitmire: Okay. So what I recommend for patients who are having a hard time remembering is... you're given a pack of five pens, right?

Patient: Um-hmm.

Ms Whitmire: So those pens are good out of the fridge at room temperature for up to a month. So you can place those pens in strategic spots around your house to help you remember to take your insulin. For instance, you can put a pen on your coffee pot, so that when you go to make your coffee, you see your pen there and you can remember to give your shot while your coffee's being made. You can also take a pen to work, as long as it's secured at your workplace, so that if you're eating at work, you don't have to remember to bring a pen with you to work; you just have it right there. I also recommend putting a pen next to your toothbrush in your bathroom because most people are going to remember to brush their teeth in the morning or brush their teeth at night. And if they see their pen there, it helps them remember to take their insulin before bedtime.

The other thing that you could try is... do you have a smartphone?

Patient: Yes.

Ms Whitmire: Okay. So, you could put an alarm on your phone. So, say you usually eat breakfast around 7:15, so you put an alarm on your phone at 7:00 that goes off and says, "Take your insulin." And maybe you put one before lunch, before dinner. I know that can seem annoying, but I believe it would only take a few days, maybe a week, of those alarms to really get you into the habit of taking it regularly, and then you wouldn't need them anymore.

Patient: Okay.

Ms Whitmire: Does that sound helpful?

Patient: Yeah, I think so.

Ms Whitmire: Okay.