

1. What is comprehensive medication management (CMM)?

CMM is like having a medication coach or expert that works with you and your doctors to make sure you are taking the best medications for you, at the right dose, the first time. For a more detailed visual representation of the CMM process click [here](#).

2. How does CMM work?

Typically, your doctor will refer you to a medication expert, most likely a clinical pharmacist, who will meet with you to review all of your medications (e.g., prescription, nonprescription, alternative, traditional, vitamins, nutritional supplements) and your history, preferences, lifestyle and health goals to determine if each medication is:

- still needed
- meets the goals set by your doctor
- appropriate and effective for your disease(s)
- safe for all disease(s) and medication(s) you are taking
- able to be taken by you as intended
- is on your health plan's formulary (and if not, they can help find a suitable substitution if possible)

If any of the above issues apply, the medication expert will meet with your doctor to make any necessary medication changes.

CMM doesn't stop with just one visit. The medication expert will continue meeting with you to monitor your medications and allow you to share your concerns and ask questions about your medication(s).

3. Why do you need CMM?

Although medications have the power to heal, they can also cause harm. We see specialists to treat long-term health issues (e.g., diabetes, hypertension, arthritis, cancer, heart disease, pain management). This means that the more doctors you see, the more medications you take, which can lead to unfavorable side effects and medication disasters. Disasters occur when doses are too high, too low, when a medication isn't suited to your genetic makeup or when taken in combination with other medications. Long story short—prescription medication disasters can make people sicker instead of better. People end up in the ER, hospitals or nursing homes and sometimes die. Having someone to help you manage, understand and answer questions about your medications and how they impact your health is important.

See the statistics:

- 1 in 2 adults have a chronic condition; 1 in 4 have multiple chronic conditions.¹
- Nearly 30% of U.S. adults take 5 or more medications.²
- An average of 75% of primary care visits involve medication prescribing.^{3,4}
- 275,000 avoidable deaths are due to non-optimized medication use—more than a quarter million lives lost.⁵

4. Do I need to ask my doctor to order CMM services for me?

If you answer yes to any of the questions below, you may need CMM:

- Are you on medications that you feel are not working?
- Are you on medications that you feel make you sicker?
- Do you have questions or concerns about your medications?
- Do you take medications for one or more chronic diseases or rare illnesses?
- Do you see multiple doctors and specialists?
- Are you confused by your medication plan?
- Are you frequently admitted to the hospital?

5. Who are these medication experts?

The CMM medication expert, typically a clinical pharmacist, has advanced training, experience and certification in the clinical use of medications. They work collaboratively with your doctor and other members on your health care team (e.g., physician assistant, nurse, dietician, social worker). Their knowledge and expertise allow them to recommend how best to personalize your medications and provide periodic assessment of how your medication regimen is helping you reach your drug therapy goals.

6. Are there others on the CMM health care team?

Yes. Depending on your needs, preferences, medications and illnesses, other health care professionals may be included on your team. Nurses, nutritionists, physician assistants, case managers and social workers are among the others that can work with you, your doctor and the clinical pharmacist to ensure your medications are working the best they can for you.

7. Will the medication expert and others on the health care team have access to my medical record?

Yes. The medication expert works as a collaborative member of your health care team and has access to your records. This allows them to understand your health background and treatment plan in order to follow recognized standards of CMM practice and to provide a comprehensive and ongoing approach to optimizing your medications.

8. Is CMM a way to switch me to cheaper generic or biosimilar medications?

Not necessarily. Although the medication expert will be able to work with you to assess the affordability of your medications, CMM is about getting your medications right. This may mean using generic or biosimilar medications, or not, depending on what works best for you. While generic or biosimilar medications usually cost less, they are not always available for some medical conditions. They also may not be the best choice if they aren't able to improve your health.

9. If I receive CMM services, will I end up on more medications?

Not necessarily. CMM commonly results in some medications being stopped but may also lead to dose changes or new medications. The aim is to get the medications right.

10. Will I have to pay more to receive CMM services?

Depending on your health plan, you may have a co-payment for the CMM visit; however, under some plan arrangements patients may be able to access these services at no additional cost. If you receive your health plan benefits from your employer, contact your benefits department to inquire. If you are covered by Medicare Advantage or Medicaid, speak with your plan representative.

11. Do I have to go to my pharmacy and wait in line for this service?

Not usually. Under ideal conditions, these clinical pharmacists work within your doctor’s office where real-time, on-site collaboration and communication can occur. Some community or retail pharmacies may offer advanced clinical services, such as CMM. If these services are available, they are usually offered by appointment (in person or over the telephone). Regardless of where CMM is provided, the clinical pharmacist must have access to your medical record and a relationship with your doctor.

12. How do I receive CMM?

Generally, your doctor will refer you to a medication expert if they think you would benefit from CMM. Alternatively, check with your employer, health plan or doctor to see if they have a CMM medication expert working in their system.

13. Is CMM available everywhere?

CMM is rapidly growing across the country with many health plans and doctors including it within their plan or office. Unfortunately, not all practices have access to a specially trained expert to deliver CMM services. Your doctor may not be aware of the opportunity or may not have been exposed to CMM before. If so, ask your doctor to look into CMM at your next visit or check with your health plan.

14. What is the value of CMM for my doctor?

With the clinical pharmacist serving as the medication expert, the doctor can work with you and your care team to develop your medication plan. This can save your doctor time and allows them to get to know you better and focus their time on your complex medical issues and chronic diseases.

15. What is the value of CMM for me?

As a patient, you benefit from:

- Improvement in your illness (e.g., healthy and controlled blood pressure, blood sugar, asthma).
- Avoidance of feeling sicker (e.g., medication side effects, disease symptoms worsening/not controlled) or medication-related disasters (e.g., ER visits, hospital readmissions, nursing home admittance, death).
- The peace of mind in knowing your medication regimen is designed to achieve your goals and that an expert has reviewed them to ensure they are effective, safe and right for you.
- The ability to get back to work, to play and to your life.

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