

What Do I Do on the 31st Day?

Category: Worry

written by Julie A. Dickson | May 28, 2022

I stare at the prescription bottle with instructions: *Take once a day. Pill count-30. Refill until this date, the following year.* I have a heart condition, Hypertrophic Obstructive Cardiomyopathy (HOCM), and I need the pills to decrease the blood pressure to and from my heart.

Okay, I think. I will take the pills and will be relieved of fatigue and out-of-breathness when climbing up my steps into the house.

I suddenly stop outside the pharmacy. It's May, and there are thirty-one days. Had the prescription started in February I would have two extra pills that would have covered March and May, but now I will be short in May, July, August, October, December and next January. That's six days without medication. I look at the instructions again. *Don't skip doses. Contact your doctor prior to discontinuing any medication.*

When I reach my house, I call the pharmacy to ask what to do about months with thirty-one days. The pharmacist is unavailable, but the pharmacy tech tells me to call my doctor's office. I place the call and am fifth in the queue. I listen to classical music, Chopin I believe, actually quite relaxing and a good choice considering I am calling a cardiology office. *You are third in the queue.*

The music gradually changes to Beethoven; I feel my heart-rate increase slightly. What happens to heart patients who skip their meds? I take a sip of water and wait. *Thanks for your patience; you are now first in the queue.* What happened to second? Perhaps the office has two receptionists fielding calls. I am about to take another sip when my call is answered.

I stand in front of my kitchen counter, pill in hand. I pick up the glass of water in my other hand and oops! The precious pill jumps from my hand into the sink where it rolls precariously close to the drain. Setting the glass down quickly, I lunge for the pill just as it disappears down the drain.

I feel my heart pound a little. Now I'm down to twenty-nine pills.

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