

Be More Engaged in Your Healthcare

Tips for Patients

Here are some tips to use before, during, and after your medical appointment to make sure you get the best possible care.

One way you can make sure you get good quality healthcare is to be an active member of your healthcare team.

Patients who talk with their doctors tend to be happier with their care and have better medical results.



Before Your Appointment

Bring all the medicines you take to your appointment. This includes:

– Prescription medicines.

– Non-prescription medicines, such as aspirin or antacids.

– Vitamins.

– Dietary or herbal supplements.

Write down the questions you have for the visit.

Know your current medical conditions, past surgeries, and illnesses.



During Your Appointment

- Explain your symptoms, health history, and any problems with medicines you have taken in the past.
- Ask questions to make sure you understand what your doctor is telling you.
- Let your doctor know if you are worried about being able to follow his or her instructions.
- If your doctor recommends a treatment, ask about options.
- If you need a test, ask:
 - How the test is done.

- How it will feel.

- What you need to do to get ready for it.

- How you will get the results.

- If you need a prescription, tell your doctor if you are pregnant, are nursing, have reactions to medicines, or take vitamins or herbal supplements.
- Find out what to do next. Ask for:
 - Written instructions.
 - Brochures.
 - Videos.
 - Websites.



After Your Appointment

- Always follow your doctor's instructions.
- If you do not understand your instructions after you get home, call your doctor.
- Talk with your doctor or pharmacist before you stop taking any medicines that your doctor prescribed.
- Call your doctor if your symptoms get worse or if you have problems following the instructions.
- Make appointments to have tests done or see a specialist if you need to.
- Call your doctor's office to find out test results. Ask what you should do about the results.

*The term "doctor" is used here to refer to the person who helps you manage your healthcare.