

Prepare for Your Doctor Visit

Make the most of your time with your doctor

The single most important way you can stay healthy is to be an active member of your own health care team. One way to get high-quality health care is to find and use information and take an active role in all of the decisions made about your care. Understanding the importance your role plays in your treatment will help you get the most benefit from your care. It is important to take an active role in your healthcare by working with your doctor, nurse, and other health care providers to learn as much as possible about your condition and the recommended treatment.



Before the Visit:

- Write down your concerns and questions about your health—then prioritize them.
- List the medications you currently take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, supplements, and medicines used on your skin. Ask your doctor for a list of your current medications that you can carry with you.
- Note drug allergies and reactions on your medication list.
- If you are experiencing a number of health problems that you would like to have addressed during your visit or if you have many questions, consider asking for additional time when you schedule your appointment.
- If you've done any related research on the Internet or elsewhere, make a copy of the information to take with you.

When you see your doctor:

- Share with your doctor what you want to accomplish during your visit including your questions and concerns.
- You may want to say, “I have a few questions. When would be the best time for me to ask them?”
- Be prepared for your doctor's questions about your medical history (health conditions, past surgeries) and your family's medical history (e.g., diabetes, heart disease, cancer).
- Consider selecting an advocate to accompany you on your visit—someone you trust to support you and who is not afraid to ask questions.
- Be prepared to take notes or ask your advocate to do this for you.
- Describe any symptoms you've had or are currently experiencing, including:
 - How long you've had them.
 - What triggers them or makes them better or worse.
 - What, if anything, you've done to treat them.
- Let your doctor know if you're receiving care from another health care professional or self-treating.
- Tell your doctor about any health or lifestyle concerns.
- If all of your questions are not answered during the visit or if you don't completely understand what you're told, ask again.



Ask your doctor:

- What has changed since my last physical examination?
- What do I need to do?
- Am I due for any routine care?
- When do you want to see me again?
- Where do you recommend I get more information about a topic discussed?

Steps to take for safety's sake:

- Repeat what you heard back to your doctor. This will not only help you remember what to do but will ensure that both you and your doctor have a common understanding.
- If your doctor is treating you for a medical condition, make sure you understand what progress you should expect and by when.

If a treatment or procedure is recommended, see the Aspirus Network fact sheet titled, "When Your Doctor Recommends a Specific Treatment, Procedure, or Surgery."

Remember to check with your health insurance plan to:

- ✓ **Verify benefits for your doctor's visit.**
- ✓ Confirm that a recommended treatment is a covered benefit.
- ✓ Notify them of any expected hospital stay.
- ✓ Get preauthorization, if needed.

By working together, you and your health care providers can make a winning team that will make the best decisions for your good health!



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