

Speak up for the sake of your health



Your doctors and other providers work hard to help you stay healthy. But it might not feel that way if you're having trouble understanding each other. Before your appointment, be ready to talk about what's important to you. Read on to get started.

Make a list before your appointment

Before you visit your provider, ask yourself some questions:

- What are my health goals?
- What symptoms do I want to tell my provider about?
- Are there any other problems or concerns I want to bring up?

Write your questions on the other side of this flyer.

Make another list of the providers and specialists you have seen recently. Include the providers you're thinking about seeing, too. Give your provider this list. He or she will make sure to coordinate your care with your other providers.

Decide what you want from your visit

Next, think about what you want to get out of your visit. Tell your provider right away what you expect. Ask what he or she expects from you. This is a great first step in taking an active role in your healthcare.

Tell your provider how much time you need for your visit. It's okay to make another appointment if you need more time to ask all of your questions.

Repeat what you hear

It can be difficult to remember what your provider tells you. This is especially true when you are feeling sick or anxious. Make sure you understand by saying, "Thank you for providing that information. Now, let me see if I understand. I heard you say . . ." It's okay to ask your providers to repeat themselves.

Take notes. After your visit, read your notes and review what you learned.

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Questions about illness or disease:

- Am I at risk for certain illnesses or diseases? Which ones?
- What can I do to be healthier? What are some small steps I can start with?
- Will it make a difference if I eat healthier foods? How about exercise? Tell me about little ways I can get started.

Questions about my diagnosis:

- What may have caused this condition?
- Will it be permanent?
- How can my doctors help me treat or manage this condition?
- Will it cause long-term effects on my lifestyle? If so, what can I expect?

Questions about medications:

- What are the common side effects?
- Will this drug interfere with any of my other medications?
- When will the medicine begin to work?
- What should I do if I miss a dose?

Questions about medical tests:

- Why are we doing this test?
- How should I get ready?
- When will I get the results?

Questions about treatment:

- What are my choices?
- What are the pros and cons of my choices?
- Are there other treatments I should consider?

What do I want to ask my provider?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What can I do to improve my health?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

How can I prepare for my next visit?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____