

Talking With Your Healthcare Provider



Taking an Active Role in Your Healthcare



This information is adapted from National Institute on Aging materials. www.nia.nih.gov



National Institute on Aging



Getting Ready for an Appointment

Create a plan

- List and prioritize your concerns with pertinent questions
- Note other health and life changes since your last visit (for example: appetite, weight)
- Gather information to take with you:
 - ✓ Other providers' contact information
 - ✓ Insurance cards
 - ✓ Medical/health history, vaccination record
 - ✓ Medicine (prescriptions, over-the-counter pills, vitamins, supplements, eye drops)



Getting Ready for an Appointment

Think about what you'll need to see, hear and communicate during your visit:



- Wear your glasses and hearing aids
- Bring a notepad and pen
- Consider bringing a family member or friend to take notes and help you remember what was said; discuss if you want some time alone with the provider
- Before your appointment, tell the office if you need assistance with an interpreter or getting out of the car to the office

Sharing Information With Your Healthcare Provider



- Focus on the reason for your visit
- Start with your symptoms
 - What are they?
 - When did they start?
 - How often do you have them? All the time or sometimes?
 - What makes them better or worse?
 - How do they affect your daily life?
- Go over your medications
- Tell the healthcare provider about your habits
- Voice other concerns; be honest

Questions To Ask About Medical Tests

- What will the test tell us?
- What does it involve?
- How should I get ready?
- Are there any dangers or side effects?
- What do I need to do to prepare to come home? (For example, can I drive myself?)
- Will insurance pay for it?
- When will I get the results and can I have a copy?



Questions To Ask About Your Diagnosis

- What may have caused this condition?
- How long will it last? Is it permanent?
- How is this condition treated or managed?
- How will it affect me?
- Where can I learn more?
- Make sure you understand: “So I think what you’re saying is.....Did I get that right?”
- What can I do to prevent a problem from getting worse?

Remember:

- If you’re not satisfied, you have the right to get a second opinion; check with your insurance

Questions To Ask About Treatment and Medication Options

Treatments

- What are my treatment choices?
- What are the risks and benefits?
- Ask yourself—which treatment is best for me, given my values and circumstances?

Medications

- When will it start working?
- What are the common side effects?
- Should I take it with food? What time of day should I take it?
- Should I avoid anything while taking it?
- What if I miss a dose?
- Talk to your healthcare provider if a generic can be substituted; if not, have the provider discuss with your pharmacist
- Talk to your pharmacist if you have concerns

