

LET'S TALK:

Questions & Conversations You Should Have with Your Health Care Provider

BEFORE YOUR VISIT

1. Record your symptoms, including how long you have had them; how often, when, and where they occur; and what improves or worsens them.
2. Be your own health advocate – write down any questions or concerns.
3. Write down your medical history, including surgeries, major illnesses, and procedures.
4. Write down your family's health history, including diseases or major medical events.
5. Make a list of all the drugs and supplements you take, making note of the reason for taking the medication, the dosage, and how long you have been taking the medication.
6. Make a list of all your health care providers, and the reason, date, and results of the visits.
7. Understand important financial information by reviewing your insurance plan "summary of benefits and coverage."

DURING THE VISIT

1. Take notes during the appointment, including information on testing, diagnosis, treatment options, follow-up care, medications, next steps, and any other important information.
2. Questions to ask regarding the diagnosis:
 - a. Is testing required?
 - b. Is testing typically covered by insurance?
 - c. What does the diagnosis mean?
What does it mean for my day-to-day?
 - d. What caused the condition?
(Genetic modifiers, lifestyle choices, or environmental risks)
 - e. What risk factors are associated with this disease or condition? How might lifestyle, diet, and environmental factors affect treatment?

3. Questions to ask regarding treatment:
 - a. What are the current treatment options?
What are the instructions?
 - b. How will I know the treatment is effective?
When should symptoms resolve?
 - c. What are common side-effects?
 - d. What is the cost of treatment? Is it generally covered by insurance? Is there a financial assistance program or is copay assistance available? Are there lower cost treatments?
 - e. Are there consequences if I delay treatment?
4. Questions to ask regarding follow-up care:
 - a. Do I need to see a specialist?
 - b. Do I need follow-up care?
 - c. If my symptoms don't improve, worsen, or return, when should I come back?
 - d. Are there any symptoms I should watch for?
 - e. How might lifestyle changes, nutrition, or other environmental factors help or harm my condition?
 - f. If treatments aren't working, are there clinical trial options?

AFTER THE VISIT

1. Keep track of your symptoms and how you feel on your medication.
2. Keep track of your adherence to the treatment plan.
3. If you have concerns, communicate with your practitioner. If you are feeling unheard, seek a new practitioner.
4. Be your own advocate and become an expert in your condition.